

Fraud office raids Maxwell HQ

LONDON (R) — Fraud officers raided the London headquarters of the late Robert Maxwell's crumbling empire on Friday while employees of his newspaper group battled to save their jobs and their pensions. One of the century's most spectacular business failures clouded the future of famous newspaper titles around the world and threatened a political row over a suggestion that Britain's conservative government knew months ago Mr. Maxwell was in trouble. Richard Stott, editor of Mr. Maxwell's flagship Daily Mirror, said he approached administrators about buying the Maxwell family's 51 per cent stake in Mirror Group newspapers Plc. Predictors poised to swoop on fragments of the empire after court administrators took charge of Mr. Maxwell's private holding companies to salvage what they could in view of debts exceeding \$2.5 billion. Police from the serious fraud office, which is investigating allegations about millions of pounds missing from the Mirror Group pension fund, searched into the night through files at Maxwell House in central London, the fraud office said. The corporate crime unit was called in last month, sparking a banking crisis for the Maxwell family group. The private companies have total debt of £1.4 billion. (See earlier story on page 7).

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King meets British general

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein received Thursday at the Royal Court General Peter de Labilliere, advisor on the Middle East affairs at the British Joint Chiefs of Staff. The meeting was attended by chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Fathi Abu Taleb, the King's military secretary His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Muhammad, and the British ambassador in Amman. The British general was also received by Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Shari Zeid Ben Shaker at the Prime Ministry. The meeting reviewed the situation in the region and cooperation between Jordan and the U.K. Field Marshal Abu Taleb separately met the general and discussed with him the scope of cooperation in the field of training personnel as well as issue of common interest.

Katyusha rockets hit Israeli-held town

SIDON, Lebanon (R) — Katyusha rockets slammed into an Israeli-held town in South Lebanon Friday for the second time in two days, security sources said. They said five rockets hit the town of Marjayoun, 12 kilometres north of Israel, where the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia has its headquarters. There was no immediate word on casualties or which group was behind the mid-morning attack. Four Katyushas fell near an SLA barracks in Marjayoun on Thursday, causing some damage but no injuries.

Syria frees prisoners in election gesture

DAMASCUS (R) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad has released 700 to 800 prisoners in a gesture apparently related to his reelection, Western sources in Damascus said Friday. The U.S. State Department reported earlier this year that up to 1,200 Syrians were held in long-term detention without trial. It was not clear how many of those freed were political detainees but the sources said some, perhaps most, were Muslim activists and leftists held without trial for anti-Assad agitation in the early 1980s. Rabbi Ibrahim Hamra, leader of Syria's Jewish community of about 4,000, told reporters last week that four of the six Syrian Jews detained for trying to emigrate have been released. Syrian Jews are allowed to travel abroad but not to leave the country as family groups, Western sources say. Like other Syrians, they are forbidden to go to Israel. Mr. Assad, the only candidate, won another seven years in power in a yes-or-no ballot on Monday.

Arafat draws Israeli flag for newspaper

PARIS (R) — The French newspaper Le Monde on Friday published drawings penned for it by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, including one depicting Israeli and Palestine flags side by side across a border line. "If (Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak) Shamir and the Israeli administration decide on peace... that will be the solution," Mr. Arafat was quoted as telling Le Monde cartoonist Jean Plantu. Mr. Plantu said Mr. Arafat did the drawings during a meeting in Tunis last May at Mr. Arafat's request after Mr. Plantu published cartoons critical of his support for Iraq in the Gulf conflict. One Arafat cartoon showed a Muslim crescent, a Christian cross and a Jewish menorah (candelabrum) intertwined.

S. African president to visit Moscow

MOSCOW (R) — South African President F.W. de Klerk will next week visit Moscow, which for decades has backed opponents of white minority rule in South Africa, a Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman said Friday. "South African President Frederick de Klerk will come to Moscow on Dec. 13," spokesman Vitaly Churkin told a news briefing. Mr. Churkin said the visit was arranged on Pretoria's initiative. Moscow aimed to encourage further progress in a complex process of negotiations taking place in South Africa on gradually dismantling minority rule, he said.

Contacts continue over new date for bilaterals

From Jordan Times Staff Reporters in Washington

INTER-ARAB and Arab-U.S. contacts continued in earnest Friday to agree on procedures and a new date for the continuation of Arab-Israeli bilateral talks, which failed to take place on Wednesday after the Israeli delegation's failure to show up.

The discussions, which have been ongoing even before Wednesday, centred on questions like who should call for the new meetings, how they should take place and in what form.

There is consensus among the four delegates that the new round of talks should not be held Monday, since acquiescing to that date, which commemorates the fourth anniversary of the intifada, would be tantamount to accepting Israeli conditions to resume the negotiations.

But the Arab side had been unable to agree on the best way to engage the Americans over the decision needed to reconvene the talks on another day next week, preferably Tuesday.

The State Department has been vague in its approach to the issue. On the one hand, it is saying that the Arabs have not officially requested direct American intervention in the dispute over the date, and that it is up to the Arab and Israeli sides to agree between them on when they should resume the talks. On the other hand, U.S. officials, apparently to appease the Israelis, are maintaining that the decision to bring Arab and Israeli delegates to Washington was not in itself an invitation, but rather a "proposal," which the two sides could accept or refuse at will.

Some Arab delegates were incensed by, others merely critical of, this attitude by the State Department, and called for a strong-worded official Arab request from the Americans to unilaterally set a new date for the talks on Tuesday.

Other delegates preferred more quiet diplomacy, urging more sympathy to the American argument, since "it is everybody's interest to keep the U.S. positively engaged in the process," as one Arab delegate put it.

The Secretary of State, James Baker, is reported to be "angry" and "extremely disappointed" with the Israeli failure to show up for the Dec. 4 talks, but he has so far kept out of direct involvement in the "wrangling" over the holding of the talks.

In her daily briefing to the media yesterday, Margaret Tutwiler, his spokeswoman, said the secretary was "kept informed" of the developments but that he had not met any of the delegates or called their leaders in the region to solve the problem.

(Baker) is leaving it to (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East) Edward Djerjian to handle the Arabs and the Israelis," an informed source said. The secretary is scheduled to appear on "Face the Nation" programme on Sunday and he might be talking about it, "but for now, he is leaving it up to Djerjian to work out the details," according to the source.

Secretary Baker is scheduled to leave for the Soviet Union and Europe between Nov. 14 and 21, and therefore he will not be in town to supervise U.S. diplomatic efforts on the Middle East if the talks are held and still ongoing during that period.

However, he was earlier quoted as saying that "we are very hopeful that the process will continue," Mr. Baker told reporters on Dec. 5 as he began a meeting with Nelson Mandela, president of the African National Congress. "We are going to continue to work to the extent that we can, to be a catalyst for peace."

Mr. Djerjian separately with the Syrian, Lebanese, Jordan and Palestinian delegations Thursday, and State Department experts conferred by telephone with other officials, including Israelis.

"We are consulting these people as we all have been over many days here, about trying to find a way to get the talks that were begun in Madrid resumed here," the spokeswoman said.

"We've made it very clear that we are here and open for business," Mr. Baker told reporters during his photo-opportunity with Mr. Mandela. "And we will continue to hope that the parties themselves will get together and agree that they do indeed want to continue the process that was begun in Madrid. We are very hopeful that they will."

Had the United States not assumed the role of a catalyst for peace in the past, the secretary said, "I am not at all sure that Madrid would have happened, that the initial round of bilateral negotiations would have taken place, or indeed that the parties would either be in Washington or on their way to Washington. So we're very hopeful that the process will continue."

Ms. Tutwiler Friday reiterated U.S. rejection to set a new official opening date for the resumption of Arab-Israeli bilateral talks.

"The U.S. is out of the proposal business. Our proposal for Dec. 4 is open ended," Ms. Tutwiler said. "We will not accept conditions on our proposal and we will not change our proposal... once you open that door where does it end?"

The two sides say that what is at stake in the seemingly petty game over dates is an issue of essential importance to both sides of the conflict: The role of the United States.

The U.S. rejection prompted Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi to accuse Washington Thursday of "shirking its responsibility as co-sponsor of the talks by covering up Israeli intransigence."

"The co-sponsors issued a proposal after the parties themselves failed to agree on a date," Ms. Tutwiler told journalists. (Continued on page 2)

Arabs reach initial agreement

The Arab delegations Friday reached initial agreement to send a letter to the State Department informing it that they will be attending Arab-Israeli bilateral talks on Tuesday, highly informed sources said. The delegates were scheduled to hold a full meeting early Saturday (Eastern time) to approve a proposal agreed to earlier by a smaller committee to this effect, the sources said. "The decision was taken to merely tell the Americans that the Arabs will be coming to the State Department Tuesday for meetings with the Israelis," an official source said. "Other proposals to ask the Americans to set a date for the talks or to meet the Israelis outside the official site of the talks have, for now at least, been discarded in favour of the above proposal," the source said. The source dismissed as "untrue" an Israeli allegation that the Arab side had rejected an "American suggestion" that the two sides meet outside the State Department to agree on a new date for the talks. "The Israelis, not the Americans, did that, and the suggestion was not acceptable to us. This is the whole story."

He explained that there was never any American mention of time or place for such a meeting and that the idea was only floated as an idea but not for serious consideration.

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Algerian rally ends without violence

ALGIERS (R) — A protest rally by tens of thousands of Islamic fundamentalists in Algeria passed off peacefully Friday as security forces manned main thoroughfares and guarded government buildings. "To avoid a bloodbath," the Islamic Salvation front (FIS) cancelled marches ruled illegal during Algeria's general election campaign and instead held rallies throughout the country. Campaigning opened Thursday. Local FIS leader Ben Jaber Messaoud told an estimated 40,000 supporters in their traditionally rallying point, Martyrs' Square: "There will be no free and honest elections without the freedom of the sharia." The crowd, which had moved there quietly after Friday prayers in mosques, exploded with shouts of "Islamic state, without a vote." Overhead a police helicopter circled. FIS leaders, including President Abassi Madani and Deputy Ali Belhadj, were arrested in June by the military enforcing a state of siege. They face charges of armed conspiracy against the state. Algeria is due to hold its first multiparty general election on Dec. 26. The original poll was postponed last June after violence between fundamentalists demanding an Islamic state and security forces. Fifty five people died. Interim FIS leader Abdul Khader Hachani said the people were meeting in 46 regions to demand the release of the leaders.

Israelis claim boycott a success, talks next week

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli cabinet minister, proclaiming the Jewish state's boycott of Middle East peace talks a victory, said Friday he expected agreement to resume negotiations in Washington next week.

"We won what we intended to win," Police Minister Ronni Milo, a close ally of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, said of Israel's refusal to accept U.S. dates for resumed negotiations.

"We assume that the talks will continue next week, whether on Monday or Tuesday," Mr. Milo said. "The date is not a vital issue."

Israel, after refusing to attend the scheduled reopening of peace talks on Wednesday, proposed a meeting next Monday.

Arab delegations object to Dec. 9 because it is the fourth anniversary of the Palestinian uprising.

In Arab East Jerusalem and parts of the occupied West Bank, shops were closed by a monthly general strike called by the Islamic Jihad, a group opposed to peace talks.

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Moscow gearing up for Mideast multilateral meeting

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet Union is gearing up for a new round of Middle East peace talks to be held in Moscow in January, Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaly Churkin said on Friday.

"We are getting positive reactions from various capitals, in connection with the declarations by the (U.S. and Soviet co-chairmen of the Middle East peace conference, about the planned Jan. 28-29 meeting in Moscow," Mr. Churkin said.

Soviet and U.S. officials would consult all interested parties before sending out formal invitations, he said. Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Belonogov flew to Washington on Thursday to discuss details of the planned meeting.

The peace process, which started in Madrid last month, ran into trouble on Wednesday when Israel failed to show up for talks in Washington.

Israel boycotted the resumption of direct peace talks with Syrian, Lebanese, and Jordanian-Palestinian delegations, saying the U.S. had dictated the date. Israeli negotiators will be in the U.S. capital for talks on Dec. 9.

But Arab delegations object to Dec. 9 because they see it as an Israeli dictate. It also coincides with the fourth anniversary of the Palestinian uprising.

Iraq denies report of attacks on Kurds

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq Friday denied U.N. reports that shelling by its troops had forced up to 200,000 Kurds to flee their homes for the comparative safety of wintry mountain heights.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) quoted an official source as saying the allegations made by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) were false.

"That spokesman is lying. The U.S. government has ordered him to make such a statement to... to pave the way for a new Security Council resolution to maintain the economic blockade imposed on Iraq," the agency quoted the spokesman as saying.

U.N. officials said Thursday that about 200,000 Kurds have fled the latest alleged Iraqi army attacks, straining the resources of U.N. teams already helping half a million uprooted people.

Iraqi shelling of areas of northern Sulaimaniyah province drove 140,800 Kurds into the Sayed Sadiq area since early October, UNHCR said.

In Erbil province further to the north, another 60,000 made for the hills after troops ordered villages to leave, it added.

Libya offers to hand over Lockerbie suspects to Arab state

CAIRO (R) — Libya has offered to hand over to an Arab country two of its nationals suspected by the West of blowing up a Pan Am plane in 1988, a state-owned Egyptian newspaper said.

"Libya's Arab league envoy offered to hand over the two Libyans accused of downing the American plane to an Arab state," Akhbar Al Yom said in an early Saturday edition.

It said Libyan envoy Ali Tariki, a former foreign minister, informed the Arab League of "positive steps to prove Libya is not involved in any terrorist operation."

The United States and Britain want the two Libyan intelligence agents to face trial in the West. The newspaper said Libya made the offer to resolve the bombing dispute peacefully.

Libya has so far refused to hand over the two suspects, saying its law forbids the extradition of its citizens. It has started its own investigation of the 1988 bombing over the Scottish town of Lockerbie in which 270 people were killed.

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Fadlallah: No hostage deal demands Israel free Arabs

BEIRUT (R) — The spiritual leader of Lebanon's Muslim fundamentalists said Friday no deal was behind the U.N.-mediated release this week of the last American hostages in Lebanon.

But Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah demanded that Israel unconditionally free an estimated 250 Lebanese prisoners.

In a Friday prayers sermon, Sheikh Fadlallah singled out kidnapped Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid among the prisoners and said the United States must use its good ties with Israel to secure his release.

That condition was dropped in U.N.-mediated talks leading to the release since August of nine westerners — six Americans and three Britons. Two German hostages are still held.

"Second, there are detainees (held by Israel) who are truly hostages, and Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid who was kidnapped by a state recognised by the United Nations," said Sheikh Fadlallah.

"Why doesn't Mr. Bush (U.S. president) demand the release of Sheikh Obeid?"

Steen, Joseph Cicippio and Terry Anderson. The two are believed held by followers of Abdul Hadi Hamadi, a security chief in Hizbollah, and brother of Muhammad Ali and Abbas Hamadi, jailed in Germany for hijacking, murder and kidnapping.

Germany and the United States called on Thursday for the immediate release of the two German hostages but denied a flurry of meetings in Bonn signaled a deal to win their freedom.

In Wiesbaden, Germany, Mr. Anderson, who spent nearly seven years as a hostage in Lebanon, said Friday that President Bush had been right to refuse to negotiate with kidnappers.

Arab group opposes repeal of resolution condemning Zionism

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The Arab group at the United Nations announced Thursday its unanimous opposition to a United States bid to revoke a controversial 1975 U.N. resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Citing decisions by the Arab League, "the Arab group opposes the raising of this issue," Ambassador Khalil Makkawi of Lebanon told a news conference.

"The Arab group considers further that revoking previous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly is, in principle, a very serious matter," said Mr. Makkawi, current chairman of the group, which reached its decision during a closed-door meeting earlier in the day.

Mr. Makkawi declined to go much beyond his prepared statement, which he first read in Arabic and then in English. But he said it was issued unanimously by the Arab group.

The United States launched a campaign this week to revoke the resolution on Zionism, adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on Nov. 10, 1975, after one of the stormiest debates in U.N. history.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said on Tuesday that Secretary of State James Baker had instructed

officials to work for repeal before the current General Assembly session is recessed on Dec. 17.

"As President (George) Bush indicated in September to the U.N. General Assembly, to equate Zionism with the intolerable sin of racism is to twist history," Ms. Tutwiler said.

"By repealing this resolution unconditionally, the United Nations will enhance its credibility and serve the cause of peace," she said.

The Arab group's statement that repeal would be a very serious matter appeared to lay the ground for getting such a move formally declared, under U.N. rules of procedure, "an important question" requiring a two-thirds majority.

The 166-member assembly decides by a simple majority of those present and voting whether an issue is "an important question."

Mr. Makkawi said U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering had told him of Washington's intention earlier this week, and he now intended informing pickering of the Arab group's opposition.

The resolution declaring Zionism to be "a form of racism and racial discrimination" was

adopted by a vote of 72 in favour and 35 against with 32 abstentions.

It was supported by the Soviet bloc and much of the Third World, including Arab and Islamic countries.

The Israeli U.N. representative at the time, Chaim Herzog, now his country's president, ended his speech by ripping up a copy of the resolution at the General Assembly podium.

Since the end of the cold war, many countries that voted for the resolution have restored diplomatic relations with Israel.

These include the Soviet Union and East European countries, most of which severed ties with Israel at the time of the 1967 Middle East war, and many African states that broke relations during the 1973 war.

Many speakers in this year's assembly session, in addition to Mr. Bush, spoke out strongly against the resolution condemning Zionism and urged its repeal.

They included then-Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin, who said the United Nations "should once and for all leave behind the legacy of the ice age like the obnoxious resolution equating Zionism to racism."

U.N. officials forecast more destitution in Iraq

ROME (R) — The U.N. agency whose food handouts are keeping 1.5 million Iraqis from starvation expect the number of destitutes there to grow the next six months.

The Rome-based World Food Programme (WFP) is handing out daily meals to some 540,000 Kurdish and Shiite refugees in the north and south of Iraq. It is also feeding a million other Iraqis classified as destitute.

"If (U.N.) sanctions continue as they are now, the likelihood is that the pressure on our programme will grow," said Bronck Szymanski, head of the WFP's disaster operations.

The WFP says the number of destitutes in Iraq, devastated by the Gulf war and the Shiite and Kurdish rebellions that followed in March, has almost doubled since the relief programme began soon after the end of the war.

There were 600,000 destitutes when the programme began and

the WFP is now forecasting an extra requirement for 100,000 tonnes of grain in the first half of 1992.

The Sanctions Committee of the United Nations Security Council is due this week to review the trade embargo imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Mr. Szymanski told Reuters the price of basic foods being monitored by the WFP in Iraq was rising by as much as 40 per cent a week. He said more and more middle class Iraqis were being forced to sell family possessions to buy food.

Sadraddin Aga Khan, the U.N. special envoy in charge of coordinating relief efforts in Iraq, said in October that although there were signs that plenty of food was getting into Iraq, the needy were suffering considerable hardship.

"It is manifest from the spot checks carried out by ourselves and other agencies that consider-



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MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Pakistan seizes hashish heading for Canada

KARACHI (R) — Pakistani officials have found 13 tonnes of hashish in a container destined for Canada, a customs spokesman said. Assistant Collector of Customs Afzal Bhatti said the drugs were seized in a raid in Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, on Wednesday. The drugs, wrapped in polythene bags, were hidden in a consignment of cotton heading for Montreal via Dubai. Mr. Bhatti said Canadian authorities had been informed. Officials of Pakistan narcotics control board said the hashish was worth \$65 million on the streets of Montreal and more in the United States. In October, Pakistani security forces seized the world's biggest heroin haul of 3.2 tonnes along with 39 tonnes of hashish near the Iranian border in Baluchistan province.

Iraqis, Iranians stone U.N. building in Turkey

ANKARA (R) — A group of Iraqi and Iranian asylum-seekers stoned a U.N. building in Ankara Friday, demanding to be sent to the West. The Anatolian news agency said about 150 people, including women and children, broke windows in the building of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees after UNHCR officials refused to talk to them. Police stopped the crowd from entering the offices, it said. Iraqi Nejad Irakli said the refugees were getting no aid from the United Nations. "We have no place to live in, they (U.N.) should help us and send us to a European country," Iranian Ajdar Abdollahi said the refugees were given £30,000 (liras) a month by the United Nations. "We can't live on this. They should send us to a European country or our children will die of hunger and cold."

U.S. urges end to 'carnage' in Somalia

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has called on warring parties in Somalia to stop the "senseless carnage" that has killed over 2,000 people and wounded over 6,000 others. In an unusually tough written statement, U.S. State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler charged that almost one year after the fall of President Mohammad Siad Barre, "Somalis kill one another at a horrifying rate. Those fighting are not attempting to depose a dictator or repel a foreign invader." Rather, the appalling and intolerable slaughter results from selfish attempts by clan-based factions to gain or maintain advantage over one another. The United States deplores the suffering imposed on the people of Mogadishu by the leaders of the warring parties (and) calls on these leaders to stop the senseless carnage and wanton destruction of their own country.

Lebanese denies obtaining dissident list

BEIRUT (R) — A Lebanese security agent has denied being involved in illegally obtaining a list of 85 dissidents detained in France during a recent visit to Paris of President Elias Hrawi. Beirut's Al Diyar newspaper on Friday quoted Agent Wissam Shami, who has been ordered expelled from France, as saying he knew the officer alleged to have passed on the list but denied asking him for "things of this sort." French Interior Minister Philippe Marchand said the Lebanese ambassador was summoned to the Foreign Ministry on Wednesday and told that Mr. Shami must leave country. "This morning the case of the Lebanese agent in question was discussed with the Lebanese ambassador who was called once again to the foreign ministry. He was told that the agent in question ... must leave our soil immediately," Mr. Marchand said.

France toughens stand on Libya

PARIS (R) — French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said in an interview published Friday there would be "no limits" to retaliation meted out to the Libyan government if it was found responsible for the bombing of two airliners. "If the Libyan state as such is responsible for these acts, if it is guilty of fomenting, ordering and having them carried out, the consequences will be in keeping with this international crime," he told the French daily Liberation.

Contacts continue

(Continued from page 1)

"As you know four parties accepted the proposal and I would even argue that we have five... Israel sent from Prime Minister (Yitzhak) Shamir a letter with Ambassador Shoval accepting the proposal," she added implicitly criticising Israel's absence at the negotiation table at the scheduled time.

Dr. Ashrawi characterised America's response to Israel's absence as inadequate and an effort to avoid confrontation with Israel.

"We feel an American withdrawal from the process," Dr. Ashrawi told journalists at a Thursday press conference. "Israel has literally gotten away with murder."

But the Palestinian response to the American rejection sharply contrasted with Syrian statements saying that Washington was exerting serious efforts to settle the dispute and that Damascus "was impressed with U.S. efforts."

But the Syrians, like the other Arab delegations, have said they will not work with Israel directly to set the date as Israel has demanded.

According to reports by the AF, a proposed meeting between the Arab and Israeli delegates to set a new date fell through after Israel insisted on holding it outside the formal State Department negotiating site, and Palestinians said they would deal only with official Israeli delegation.

Asked to define the U.S. role as a co-sponsor, Ms. Tutwiler said: "The United States will continue to bridge the differences and work as a facilitator to try to get the parties together... but that is very different than saying the United States and the Soviet Union considered changing the proposal. We are not."

"Once you start down that road it will never end and our opinion and the co-sponsor pay off. You cannot pick and choose what you want to change," Ms. Tutwiler's announcement

that the U.S. is "out of the proposal business" was interpreted by some observers here as a "significant" shift in American policy. "Taken together with his insistence that the Washington talks, when they materialise, will be the result of a 'proposal' rather than an 'invitation', the announcement means that the Americans could be backtracking on their commitment to be an active partner in the peace process," one observer said.

Other observers, however, disagreed and interpreted the statement by Ms. Tutwiler as a pressure tactic to get the Arabs and Israelis to talk to one another and solve their own problems. "Baker used this tactic whenever he visited the region and could not get the parties to accept his proposals," an American analyst said.

"His threats of leaving everything and going back home usually worked," the analyst added. "This latest statement could well be part of the same strategy."

George Hawatmeh, Nermouh Murad, Salameh Ne'matt, Ghadeer Taber and Caroline Faraj contributed to this story.

Libya ready to hand over suspects

(Continued from page 1)

may at the Arab League's support for Libya following a meeting of the 21-member body in Cairo on Thursday.

The League called on the United Nations to join it in studying Western charges that Tripoli was behind the bombing.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said there was strong evidence that Libyan agents were responsible for the 1989 bombing of a French UTA aircraft over Niger in which 170 people died.

"I cannot understand how, in these circumstances, the Arab League thinks it right to express its solidarity with Libya," Mr. Hurd said in a message to Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid, made available by the British Foreign Office.

"This will be seen as an insensitive rebuff to those countries who have lost their citizens in these terrorist acts and will make a deep and distressing impact," Mr. Hurd said.

The league, which heard Libyan complaints of Anglo-American "threats" against Tripoli, stressed "solidarity with sister Libya and praised its positive approach to unveil the facts surrounding this regrettable accident."

There was no immediate confirmation of Saturday's newspaper report by the Libyan mission. The United States and Britain have threatened action against

Libya unless it hands over the suspects.

Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi warned the West in an interview that using force against his country would sabotage the Middle East peace process and trigger holy war by extremists.

"The military option will sabotage the peace process..." Colonel Qadhafi told Egypt's semi-official Al Ahram daily in the second part of an interview to be published Saturday.

Col. Qadhafi used the interview to send the West conciliatory signs and deny charges that Libya masterminded the 1988 bombing.

Using force will "then give extremists in the Arab World, the chance of jihad," the chance (to) settle accounts with regimes and governments in the name of defending Libya," Col. Qadhafi warned.

He said that unlike former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, President George Bush was a "veteran politician... a learned man who does not suffer from a complex."

I believe that Bush is an accu-

rate man who does not do anything until after studying it and knowing the results beforehand.

Mr. Reagan ordered a bombing raid against Libya in 1986 after Washington accused it of blowing up a Berlin disco frequented by American servicemen.

Col. Qadhafi said if Mr. Bush succeeded in his current effort to bring peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours "we will meet with him some day and I believe we can establish an understanding."

Col. Qadhafi strongly renounced terrorism and said attacks against Israeli civilians in the occupied territories were illegal.

"To fight the Israeli (occupying) army is legitimate but to try to kill Israeli students, blow up a bus, a building or a hotel that is terrorism," he said.

In the first part of the interview published on Friday, Col. Qadhafi said he was a revolutionary and not a terrorist.

He said Libya broke all ties with the Irish Republican Army after deciding it was a terrorist group and not a liberation movement.

3 killed in Zairean violence

(Continued from page 1)

the conference to set up an interim government and has demanded that Mr. Mobutu, who seized power in a 1965 coup and whose term as president ran out on Wednesday, step down immediately.

Mr. Mobutu said in a speech he would remain in office to assure continuity and announced he would be a candidate for reelection. But he did not give a date.

The coalition had called for strikes on Thursday, the day after Mr. Mobutu's speech, and the capital was effectively shut down.

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PROGRAMME TWO			
18:00	Le Cavalier de Labyrinte	19:00	News in French
18:30	Les Cavaliers du Ciel	19:30	Documentary
19:00	News in Hebrew	19:30	News in Arabic
19:30	Totally Hidden VI	20:00	Encounter
20:00	Life on the Land	20:30	News in English
20:30	News in English	21:00	News in English
21:00	News in English	21:30	News in English
21:30	News in English	22:00	News in English
PRAYER TIMES			
04:54	Fajr	12:00	Zuhra
05:16	(Sunrise) Dhuha	12:30	Dhuha
11:26	Dhuha	14:12	Asr
14:12	Asr	16:36	Maghrib
17:58	Isha		
CHURCHES			
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifich, Tel. 810740			
Annunciation of God Church, Tel. 637785			
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590			
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440			
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757			
Terrence Church Tel. 623366			
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623543			
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543			
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 713311			
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772661			
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751			
Armenian International Church Tel. 683326			
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295			
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623824, 654932			
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675891			
WEATHER			
It will be partly cloudy and winds will be southeasterly moderate. In Amman, it will be partly cloudy with southerly moderate winds and choppy seas.			
Min./Max. temp. 4/15			
Amman 9/21			
Aqaba 9/21			
Deserts 3/16			
JORDAN VALLEY			
10 / 21			
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 14, Aqaba 20. Humidity readings: Amman 67 per cent, Aqaba 36 per cent.			
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS			
NIGHT DUTY			
AMMAN:			
Dr. Tawfiq Qub'in	623029	Dr. Saad Tawfiq	788285
Dr. Ghaleb Zawahid	736123	Dr. Basim Farajidich	782000
First pharmacy	661912	Perdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asmaa pharmacy	637055	Neiroukh pharmacy	623072
Al Salam pharmacy	636730	Yacoub pharmacy	644943
Shamsi pharmacy	657660		
JERICO:			
Dr. Masen Jouria	(-)	Al Shamsi pharmacy	(279825)
ZARQA:			
Dr. Yousef Awad	(-)	Khalifah pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES			
Food Control Centre	637111	Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630441	Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228	Police	773121
Highway Police	943402	Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321	Hotel Complaints	603630
Police Complaints	661176	Water and Sewerage	897467
Complaints	787111	Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230	Central Amman Telephone	010230
Repairs	623101	Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
JORDAN TELEVISION			
773111	Radio Jordan	774111	Water Authority
630100	Jordan Electricity Authority	615615	Electric Power
636381	RJ Pigeon Information	08-33200	Company
08-33200	RJ Pigeon Information	08-33200	Queens Ala Int. Airport
HOSPITALS			
AMMAN:			
Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32	Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Al-Jahat Maternity, J. Amn	644412/2	Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mallou, J. Amman	636140	Palatine, Shamsi	664171/4
Shamsi Hospital	669131	University Hospital	645845
Al-Munzer Hospital	687227/9	The Islamic, Abdali	666127/57
Al-Ahli, Abdali	666144/6	Italian, Al-Mohajress	777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafiah	775111/26	Amay, Marka	891611/15
Qweir, Alla Hospital	622401/50	Amal Hospital	622401/50
ZARQA:			
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323		
FOR THE TRAVELLER			
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT			
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)32200-5, where it should always be verified.			
ARRIVALS			
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)			
05:00	Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)		
Other Flights (Terminal 2)			
06:30	Paris (AF)		
08:15	Beirut (ME)		
13:00	Sams (TY)		
MARKET PRICES			
Upplower price is fix per kg.			
Apple	600 / 500		
Banana	500 / 450		
Banana (Mekummar)	350 / 300		
Beans	800 / 600		
Cabbage	160 / 120		
Cauliflower	220 / 170		
Cucumber (large)	180 / 120		
Cucumber (small)	360 / 220		
Eggplant	280 / 220		
Garlic	800 / 700		
Grapes	900 / 800		
Guava	300 / 400		
Lemon	180 / 120		
Marrow (large)	160 / 120		
Marrow (small)	330 / 300		
Onion	170 / 120		
Onion (dry)	430 / 400		
Pepper (hot)	320 / 260		
Pepper (sweet)	300 / 250		
Potato	400 / 300		
Sage	220 / 180		
Spaghetti	220 / 180		
Sweet melon	220 / 180		
Tomatoes	420 / 360		
Watermelon	180 / 120		

05:11 05:49

Rescue units help more people, re-open roads

AMMAN (J.T.) — The torrential rains and floods in northern regions of the country are reported to have injured seven persons who were taken to hospital for treatment and at least seven homes were completely flooded with water.

Civil Defence Department (CDD) officials said that the worst affected regions were those of the northern Jordan Valley region, which witnessed floods in most areas. The CDD officials said their teams were continuing their rescue missions Thursday and re-opening roads and clearing culverts and canals.

Earlier reports said that one person had died in the torrent at Yafodeh near Amman and about 100 others were rescued after being trapped in their cars and homes.

As the Department of Meteorology predicts that another depression with more rains approaching the Kingdom,

the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) issued a report about the collected rain water in the dams used for irrigation purposes.

According to JVA Secretary General Abdul Aziz Wisan, the total amount collected at the King Talal Dam, the largest in the country with an 85 million cubic metre capacity, was 29 million cubic metres up from nine million cubic metres before the rains. The Kafrein Dam had 2.8 million cubic metres, the Wadi Shueib Dam had 2.1 million cubic metres, the Wadi Al Arab Dam had 2.2 million cubic metres and the Sharhabil Ben Hasna Dam had 380,000 cubic metres, he said.

He added that the Kafrein Dam's capacity is 3.5 million cubic metres, the Wadi Al Arab Dam can hold 17 million cubic metres and the Sharhabil Dam has a capacity of 3.5 million cubic metres.

Parliament speakers to respond Saturday to speech from throne

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament Saturday present their replies to the speech from the throne delivered by His Majesty King Hussein on Dec. 1.

The speakers of the two Houses, Ahmad Al Lawzi and Abdul Latif Arabiyat, are expected to formally submit their replies at a meeting at the Royal Court.

In its reply, to be presented to the King, the Upper House will reaffirm the House's commitment to cooperate with the government within the framework of the constitution and the National Charter. It will also support the government's endeavours to coordinate efforts with the Arab countries and the Palestinian people in order to ensure the restoration of the Palestinian people's rights and lands.

The Lower House's reply, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, will reaffirm the House's willingness to cooperate with the executive authority and will help bring into being laws, political parties and the press. The House, Petra said, will reaffirm support for the new government in its endeavour to re-establish solidarity among Arab countries.

The two Houses held separate meetings Thursday during which they ratified the contents of the reply speeches.

In other business, the Lower House decided to send cables of appreciation to the King for commending the death sentences on six convicted members of Mohammad's Army to life imprisonment.

The House also decided that Lower House sessions by held twice a week on Sunday afternoons and Wednesday mornings.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker has sent to the Royal Court a letter which contained a list of names of the members of the Lower House's standing council.

The list comprises House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat as council chairman, Abdul Karim Dughmi as first deputy, Mahmoud Hweimal as second deputy, Dr. Nayef Abu Tayeh and Abdullah Zreikat as the chairman's assistants.



ROYAL OPENING — Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath has opened a specialised centre for diagnosing chest disease in the Ras Al Naqab area in Maan Governorate. The centre is the first of its kind in the area and will be run by the Maan Al Naqab Society. Princess Sarvath toured the centre's various sections and was briefed on its

activities and the services it provides to tuberculosis patients. Maan Governor Qasem Al Farraya delivered an address in which he welcomed Princess Sarvath, thanked her for opening the centre and lauded the Hashemite leadership's achievements in various fields.

Arab council calls for action on charter, help for Iraqi children

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Social Development Amin Awad Mashagbeh Friday returned home from Cairo where he attended the meetings of the Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers and called on Arab states which have not so far ratified the Charter of the Rights of the Arab Child to do so. He noted that Jordan was one of the first countries that signed the charter as well as the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Arab Social Affairs Ministers also decided to form a committee to formulate the Arab Family Charter before 1993, when the International Charter of the Family will be announced, Dr. Mashagbeh said.

He pointed out that Jordan has received a symbolic financial support from the Arab Fund for Social Work to help it cope with the consequences resulting from the return of hundreds of thousands of Jordanians from the Arab countries of the Gulf.

Although the financial support is very small and token, it demonstrates the Arab commitment to support Jordan in addressing the negative consequences of the Gulf crisis, he said.

The minister added that the Arab Fund for Social Work was willing to provide cash and in-kind support for the children of Iraq to help them overcome the difficult situation they are currently suffering from.

The Iraqi delegation to the meetings sent a memo to the Executive Bureau of the Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers calling on it to support the Iraqi children, who are suffering as a result of the economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations on Iraq. The council also agreed to issue a statement on the American threats to Libya over the bombing of the American jetliner in 1988.

Also, the Arab League Council Thursday issued a statement in Cairo expressing Libya's initiatives to contain the bombing of

the American plane over Scotland and to open an international investigation into the case. At the conclusion of its meetings, which were held at the level of permanent representatives at Libya's request, the Arab League Council called on the United States and the United Kingdom not to take any economic or military action because such an action would aggravate and further complicate the situation in the region.

The statement stressed that such a dispute should be settled by peaceful means in accordance with the principles of the United Nations and the Arab League. The council also called for forming a joint U.N., Arab League committee to study all documents related to this case.

The council requested the Arab League secretary general to follow up on the implementation of the council's decision and to consider the council in session to follow up on the developments of the situation.

Jail sentences of Mohammad's Army defendants reduced

AMMAN (Petra) — Speakers of the Upper and Lower House of Parliament Ahmad Al Lawzi and Abdul Latif Arabiyat Thursday thanked His Majesty King Hussein for commencing the death sentences of six members of the so-called Mohammad's Army to life imprisonment with hard labour.

In two separate cables to the King, Mr. Lawzi and Dr. Arabiyat said the Royal Decree was well-received by the Jordanian people, who were touched by the wise decision, reflecting the spirit of tolerance.

They voiced hope that the Royal Decree commencing the death sentence passed by the State Security Court on eight defendants, will help others to follow the right path and serve the best interest of the country and its people and to defend its gains and achievements.

Building on the Royal Decree, and after reconsidering the sentences, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Thursday ordered the sentences passed by the State Security Court reduced to reflect the spirit of democracy Jordan is witnessing. The prime minister ordered the prison terms of four members of Mohammad's Army to be reduced from life imprisonment with hard labour to 15 years with hard labour.

The defendants involved are Mustafa Hassan Mousa, Salem Mohammad Salem, Yousef Mohammad Hassan and Khader Abdul Rahman Abu Housher.

The sentences of four others, Mohammad Hassan Khalifeh, Samih Mohammad Abu Zeidan, Walid Ahmad Abu Al Saud and Haitham Zuhdi, Mohammad Abdullah, were reduced to 10 years with hard labour instead of 15 years with hard labour.

The jail sentences of two others, Khalid Mahmoud Mohammad and Amer Mohammad Ismail, were also reduced from 10 years with hard labour to seven and half years with hard labour.

In addition, the prime minister reduced the prison sentence pas-

sed on Ibrahim Abdul Qader Abdullah from seven and half years with hard labour to five years with hard labour and the sentence of Mohammad Jamil Wheidi from five years to four years with hard labour.

The 20 member-group were given various sentences by the State Security Court. Eight of them were sentenced to death, two in absentia, for carrying out terrorist activities and plotting to assassinate Jordanian and foreign personalities.

The other twelve were given jail sentences ranging from four years to life imprisonment. The verdict followed several court sessions in which several witnesses for the prosecution testified before the court incriminating the men.

In keeping up with its policy of opposing the death penalty, London-based Amnesty International (AI) appealed to King Hussein and Sharif Zeid to commute the death sentences of the eight defendants. It also requested that defendants be given a right to appeal.

AI has been following up the case carefully since the members of the Mohammad's Army were arrested earlier this year. The trials have been marked with protests, walkouts by defence lawyers and allegations of torture to obtain confessions. Officials of the human rights organisation have expressed concern over the apparent detention of the suspects for two months during which they were denied the right to see their lawyers.

Bread prices to remain stable, officials say

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government will not introduce any increases to the prices of bread and the product will not be added to the list of subsidised foodstuffs sold through ration food coupons.

The decision was taken Thursday by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and announced at a meeting with Minister of Supply Mohammad Saqqaf and senior ministry officials.

Only powdered milk, sugar, and rice are being sold at subsidised prices to Jordanian citizens through coupons, a system introduced last year to prevent manipulation of prices and smuggling of food commodities abroad.

The government has no intention of applying the food coupon system to bread, which is considered as a basic food commodity for Jordanian citizens, said the prime minister at the meeting. Sharif Zeid also stressed that it was important for the Ministry of Supply to adopt strict measures designed to prevent any manipulation of prices of basic foodstuffs.

The prime minister emphasised that the Civil Service Consumer Corporation should ensure that all commodities are sold to government employees and their families at cost price.

At the outset of the meeting, Mr. Saqqaf presented a general briefing about the supply situation in the Kingdom and the Ministry of Supply's plans and programmes to cooperate with the private sector to ensure continued services to limited-income groups.

Following the meeting, Mr. Saqqaf said that the prime minister had reaffirmed the government's concern over the food security issue for the citizens at this crucial stage. At the meeting, discussions covered the problems encountered by the ministry and matters related to maintaining strategic supplies in the country, Mr. Saqqaf said.

He said that the Ministry of Supply will maintain and adhere to its basic plans of ensuring sufficient supplies of wheat, flour, sugar, rice, milk and other basic commodities.



MEDAL PRESENTATION — His Majesty King Hussein has conferred on Greek Catholic Bishop of Amman Saba Yankin the Jordanian Independence Medal of the First Order. The medal was presented to the bishop by Chief of the Royal Court Adnan Abu Odeh at a meeting held at the Royal Court.

German officials wind up visit today

AMMAN (J.T.) — Two senior German Interior Ministry officials wind up a five-day visit to Jordan today and leave for home.

The two, Hans Ludwig Zachart, president of the Criminal Investigation Bureau, and Hagen Fabarschensky, director of the Anti-Narcotic Department, Friday were accompanied by Jordanian officials on a tour of the ancient Nabatean city of Petra and other touristic sites.

During their stay here, they were received by His Majesty King Hussein, who they briefed on current German-Jordanian coordination and cooperation in the field of combating crime and in stemming drug trafficking operations.

The two German officials were also received by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Thursday in the presence of Public Security Department (PSD) Director Fadel Ali.

Discussion centered on German-Jordanian cooperation in security matters with particular attention to means of combating crime and drug trafficking operations.

The German government has provided the Kingdom with helicopters and vehicles especially equipped to combat drug trafficking and monitor border areas to prevent smuggling.

The prime minister voiced Jordan's deep appreciation for the assistance and expressed satisfaction with the ongoing cooperation aimed at offering service to the world community in the form of fighting crime. German ambassador to Jordan Heinrich Reiners and PSD officers were present at the meeting.

The two German officials had toured PSD departments and looked into their criminal investigation procedures and inspected the criminal laboratory facilities.

Earlier, they had met with the Interior minister and other officials.

Also Thursday, King Hussein conferred Jordan's Al Kawkab medals of the Second and Third Order upon Mr. Zachart and Mr. Fabarschensky, respectively. Maj. Gen. Fuheid decorated them with the medals.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of scientific and technical books at the University of Jordan.
- ★ Art exhibition by Dia Azawi at Muna Saadi Studio — tel. 829700.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by a group of Iraqi artists at Aliz Art Gallery.
- ★ Acting exhibition by Jumana Al Bassal at Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation Gallery — opening ceremony at 6 p.m.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Jalal Oreikat at the Phoenix Art Gallery.
- ★ Antique Christmas show of Juffa Hanaia at the Marriott Hotel.

FILE

- ★ Videos entitled "Exodus from Germany," "From Partition to Unification" and "Berlin, Dec. 22, 1989, the Brandenburg Gate is Open" will be shown today at the Goethe Institute at 8 p.m. on the occasion of the first anniversary of German reunification.



United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Amman, invites qualified candidates to apply for positions of a temporary nature initially up to August 1992, in the general services category. They are as follows:

- Administrative Assistants
- Personnel Assistants
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- Finance Assistants
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- Programme Assistants
- Conference Assistants
- Reference Assistants

Qualifications:

1. B.A. or Bsc degree in relevant field
2. Working knowledge of the use of PCs essential
3. Fluent in both Arabic and English, reading, writing and spoken. French desirable
4. Minimum three years' experience.

Research Assistants

Qualifications:

1. University degree in the following fields: economics; social sciences; geography; engineering and statistics
2. Working knowledge of the use of PCs
3. Fluent in both Arabic and English, reading, writing and spoken. French desirable
4. Minimum requirement of three years of relevant work experience.

Secretaries

Qualifications:

1. High school and secretarial diplomas
2. Working knowledge of word processing using WORD PERFECT or WANG
3. Fluent in both Arabic and English, reading, writing, and spoken. French desirable
4. Well acquainted in all other secretarial duties
5. Successful in passing United Nations clerical test
6. Successful in passing typing tests in Arabic and English
7. Successful in passing United Nations prescribed shorthand test
8. Successful in passing United Nations prescribed test transcribing from Dictaphone
9. Minimum requirement of five years of relevant work experience.

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Interested candidates should send their curriculum vitae to the following address:

Personnel Section
P.O.Box 927 115
Amman, Jordan

The last date for receipt of applications is Dec. 12, 1991.

2. Working knowledge of word processing using WORD PERFECT or WANG
 3. Fluent in both Arabic and English, reading, writing, and spoken. French desirable. For posts in Conference Services Section, any combination of two languages
 4. Successful in passing United Nations clerical test
 5. Successful in passing typing tests in Arabic and English (Arabic 40 w.p.m.; English 70 w.p.m.)
 5. Minimum requirement of two years of relevant work experience.
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 2. Fluent in both Arabic and English, reading, writing, and spoken
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 2. Fluent in both Arabic and English, reading, writing, and spoken
 3. Three years of military or police training essential
 4. Driving licence essential
 5. Minimum requirement of three years' experience in the relevant field.
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- Qualifications:**
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 2. Fluent in both Arabic and English, reading, writing, and spoken
 3. Minimum requirement of five years' relevant experience.
- Telephone operators:**
- Qualifications:**
1. High school diploma essential
 2. Fluent in both Arabic and English, reading, writing, and spoken
 3. Minimum requirement of five years' relevant experience.
- Proofreaders**
- Qualifications:**
1. High school diploma essential
 2. Fluent in both Arabic and English, reading, writing, and spoken
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 4. Minimum requirement of three to five years' experience.

Jordan Times

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Exemplary compassion

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's commutation of the death sentences passed on six members of the so-called Mohammad's Army, who were convicted by the State Security Court, to life imprisonment is an act of exemplary compassion that has become a trademark of the monarch. Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker followed, by lowering all the other sentences passed by the court.

There is little doubt that the King intended to convey a message to those extremist elements and their supporters by giving them an additional food for thought and reconsideration and a cause for repentance.

From a strictly legal point of view, however, what the King and the prime minister have done is in keeping with the spirit of Jordan's international treaty obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which the Kingdom had ratified in 1976. Paragraph 2 of Article 6 of the said covenant states that "in countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentences of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes...." Paragraph 4 also stipulates that "anyone sentenced to death shall have the right to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence." Accordingly, the international covenant not only suggests and encourages the phasing out of capital punishment but also proposes the commutation of such sentences as a matter of "right."

Over and above these policy and legal considerations, there is also the matter of the serious legal flaw in the administration of criminal justice in the State Security Court under existing legislations. Paragraph 5 of Article 14 of the aforementioned international instrument clearly bestows on all criminally convicted persons the right to appeal sentences imposed on them to a higher tribunal. That paragraph reads as follows: "Everyone convicted of a crime shall have the right to his conviction and sentence being reviewed by a higher tribunal according to law." Under existing law, the persons found guilty by the State Security Law have no right of appeal. New draft laws purport to rectify such a serious omission. Even if the government wants to provide the convicted persons the right of appeal, it cannot do so under current applicable laws. The file on Mohammad's Army, therefore, serves as a reminder that existing laws need to be redressed in the shortest possible time in order to enshrine the right of appeal in the legislation of the country.

The interventions of the King and the prime minister in the case came, therefore, not only to bestow compassion on convicted felons but also to provide the necessary equity that was lacking due to flaws in the existing legislation. As a matter of fact the jurisprudence of equity is designed to accomplish just that objective by complementing the dictates of law with necessary dosages of humanism and magnanimity. Let us hope that the spirit behind the intervention of the King will be reciprocated by all those who still harbour false hopes that they can threaten the security and stability of the country with impunity.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily described Israel's absence from the bilateral talks in Washington as a big insult to the American administration, the American people and the United Nations. Israel's stand was a reply to the American nation which has been providing the Israeli people with sustenance, military aid and the means to perpetuate their occupation of the Arab territories, the paper said. It said that while millions of Americans live in abject poverty with many of them homeless and living off charity and welfare handouts, successive American administrations have been milking the American taxpayers for money that went to the Jewish state in different forms of aid. Despite all that Washington had done to please the Israelis and their leaders, their delegation failed to attend the Dec. 4 talks in the American capital as arranged by the American president and his Secretary of State James Baker, the paper pointed out. It said that the world is now awaiting effective response from the American administration to such a big insult and a speedy action to force the Jewish state to accept the international legitimacy and the U.N. resolutions. The United States, which pursues a war of genocide on the Iraqi people through the embargo, should take proper action with regard to Israel's refusal to implement U.N. resolutions and end its occupation of other countries, the paper said. It said that the world is watching to see the U.S. reaction to Israel's arrogance and defiance.

A columnist in Al Rai Arabic daily has urged the Arab League, which opened a meeting in Cairo Thursday to discuss American threats against Libya, to adopt a position which would not compromise the security of the Arab Nation. Mahmud Rimawi said that the Arab masses do not expect from the league to hand over the Libyans allegedly responsible of the Pan Am crash of 1988, nor it is beneficial to issue a statement attacking the U.S. administration. He said that the Arab League is called upon to announce that the Arab Nation undertakes to resolve the issue through dialogue and quiet diplomacy in a neutral manner. The writer said that the Arabs can by no means allow the Arab League to sacrifice Libya after Iraq for the sake of sufficing the lust of warmongers claiming to be building a new world order. He also paid tribute to Egypt for undertaking to serve as an arbitrator in this question hosting an international panel to pass judgment in the Pan Am case. The writer said the Arab masses can by no means accept a situation whereby the Americans level accusations against them and at the same time be judges trying Arabs and condemning them for alleged crimes.

Soviet Union faces uncertain future after a 'special year'

By Oliver Wates
Reuter

MOSCOW — The coming year is a special one, "President Mikhail Gorbachev said in his new year's message for 1991. "In it we must decide the fate of our multi-ethnic state."

Even Mr. Gorbachev could hardly have foreseen just how special.

As the year draws towards its close, the multi-ethnic state he championed is near to breaking up into its 15 constituent republics — the three Baltic states have already left.

The Kremlin, the force holding the union of 285 million people together, has surrendered almost all power to republican governments.

The economy, amid the uncertainties of a free market, is spiralling towards collapse.

The 60-year-old Soviet president himself is fighting for political survival and many pundits — and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) — doubt he will last out the year.

The fate of the Soviet Union is anything but decided.

Ahead lie economic hardship and political confusion. Then, at

best, a tentative new start for the territories of "the former Soviet Union" as it is widely known — at worst, famine, ethnic conflict and even civil war.

Fighting is already a daily occurrence in the Caucasus region between Armenians and Azeri, Georgian and Ossetian.

Apart from the Nazi invasion of 1941, this has been the most tumultuous year since the old Russian empire collapsed seven decades ago.

The tide of democratic reforms launched in 1985 swept on. Elections were held in republic after republic.

Mr. Gorbachev himself seemed to draw back from the process, defending his army's use of force in Lithuania and appointing conservatives to top government posts.

Then on Aug. 19 a group of right-wingers close to Mr. Gorbachev tried to turn back the clock.

They sent tanks onto the streets of Moscow but lacked the ruthlessness to make their coup succeed. Three young men were killed and after three days it collapsed.

The result was the final des-

truction of the conservative, centrist core which had held the giant nation together since the days of revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin.

Conservatives were disgraced and hounded from office. The Communist Party, unchallenged ruler since it seized power in 1917, was humiliated, disorganised and effectively banned.

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, backed by the West, were allowed to secede. All of the remaining 12 republics except Russia and Kazakhstan declared their independence.

Boris Yeltsin, elected president of the Russian Republic and hero of resistance to the coup, seized the initiative.

Russia took over the economic ministries the Central Bank, television and radio, oil and gold reserves. Across the union assertive republican authorities appropriated state assets.

The break-up of the party's main weapon, the KGB security police, began. The armed forces, their reason for existence now in question, were demoralised, deprived of funds.

The centre was left with a tentative role in foreign policy

and authority — real or merely formal — over the four million strong armed forces and the nuclear arsenal.

So, what now?

Optimists hope that once the heady wine of national freedom is digested, the 12 surviving Soviet republics will be able to work out their future relations in a disciplined manner.

They could decide on an orderly divorce and division of assets or that their material interests lie in some form of economic union, perhaps based on the European Community.

"Personally I expect that common sense will triumph in the end," said Yuri Nikolayev, deputy editor of the conservative daily Sovetskaya Rossiya.

"The union will re-emerge in a new form, because above all of the need for economic development, the fact that a single economic space is essential. But it will not happen in 1992."

His counterpart on the liberal Nezavisimaya Gazeta, Igor Zakharov, said: "It's still on the decline, but it's not yet at the bottom. Only after the bottom, after the collapse ... (can things improve). I don't see any other

way out, we still need a crisis." Pessimists see only a disorderly disintegration, ethnic differences exacerbated by unemployment, hyper-inflation and hunger, rows over property and borders leading to fighting, with the fear of a nuclear civil war in the background.

Few politicians foresee another military coup like the August fiasco, though no-one will rule it out absolutely.

But the fear of popular unrest is in everyone's mind. People are angry at the queues, the squalor, the inflation. The radical market reforms prescribed by most economists could make things much worse, provoking rebellion, destroying the fragile democracy and opening the way to a new dictatorship.

"It can blow up in our faces in the next months," new U.S. Ambassador Robert Strauss told reporters recently, making his case for Western aid.

"I don't think you are going to see a coup, but if we get a tough enough winter, we could see people out on the streets."

"I would rather spend a couple of billion bucks (dollars) than fail to spend a couple of billion bucks

and see some kind of fascist set-up here."

One big test of the people's patience should come even before the end of 1991 when Mr. Yeltsin fulfils a promise to free prices in his republic of 150 million people.

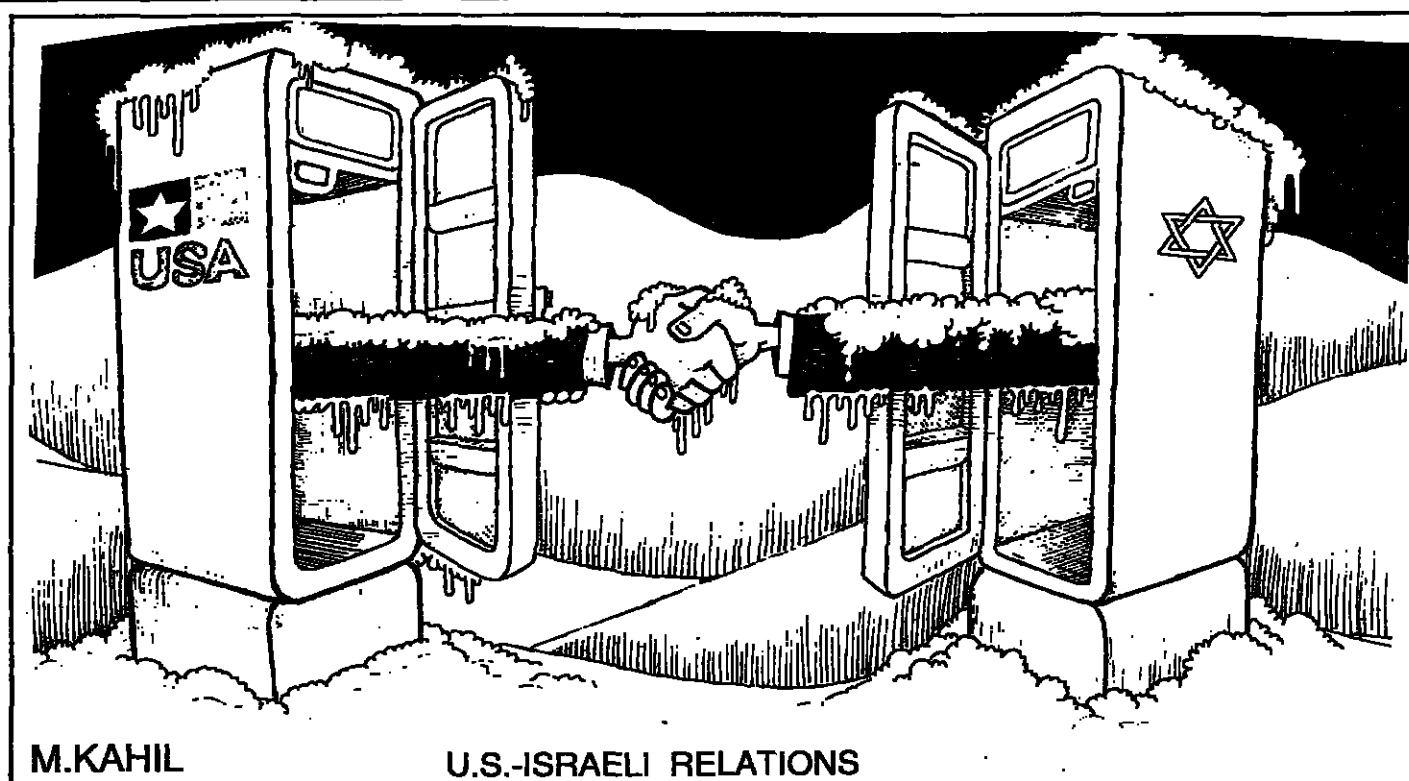
It could force the other republics to follow suit or precipitate the collapse of the union as they erect hasty border controls to prevent their economies being swamped.

Mr. Gorbachev, past master of political manoeuvre, has not given up his fight to hold the multi-national state together.

The West, alarmed at the thought of 30,000 nuclear warheads falling into unreliable hands, backs him.

But few people in Moscow give him much chance of success. The Ukraine's referendum vote on Dec. 1 for independence was another nail in the coffin of the union.

Increasingly isolated, Mr. Gorbachev depends for his political survival on Mr. Yeltsin — with no union, he has no job. Even Mr. Yeltsin may one day decide the fight is hopeless and Russia would do better to go it alone.



M.KAHIL U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS

The week in print

U.S. administration tested on Israeli intransigence; Arabs should stand united to face challenges

THE PEACE talks in Washington, inter-Arab affairs and a host of domestic issues were given prominence by Jordanian dailies in the past week.

Al Rai Arabic daily accused the United States of colluding with Israel to abort the talks because, it said, the U.S. has done nothing to respond firmly to Israel's boycott of the bilateral talks which were supposed to have begun on Dec. 4. Had not Israel received the green light from Washington, it would have never dared to boycott the talks and had Israel not been given assurances from the U.S. administration, its negotiating team would have taken their seats at the negotiating table, said the paper.

It stressed that any decision for withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab lands is American, as was the occupation of Arab land done through American aid, American money and American weapons and full U.S. support in 1967.

Sawt Al Shaab daily said that Israel's refusal to attend the talks on schedule constituted an open defiance of the Bush administration and the whole world community. This challenge places President George Bush and his administration face to face with a serious test and should prompt it to take active measures to ensure that the Jewish state respects the international legitimacy, said the paper.

A columnist in Al Dustour said the United States should bear the responsibility for Israel's intransigence and adamant stand simply because it is the United States which had been supporting the Jewish stand and providing it with the means of perpetuating its hold over occupied Arab lands.

Saleh Al Qallab said that the United States realises that Israel is not willing to take an initiative and embark on peace in exchange for land with the

Arabs and therefore, it is up to the United States to force it to do so.

Washington's unlimited support for the Jewish state has caused its Zionist leaders to mutiny against the U.S. and the world community, the writer said.

Mohammad Kawash said in an effective reply to Israel's current position would be a concerted Arab front and a united voice calling on the U.N. and the U.S. to implement U.N. Security Council resolutions immediately.

The writer said that the Arabs should adhere to their position of demanding an end to settlements and a total withdrawal of Israeli forces.

His views are supported by Suleiman Qubailat, in Sawt Al Shaab, who demanded that the Arabs should exercise pressure on the U.S. administration which can in turn pressure Israel into changing its position and complying with the requirements of peace and international legitimacy.

Furthermore, the writer said, the Arabs should demand to know Washington's policy towards the implementation of resolutions 242 and 338 and the future of the Palestinian people after the autonomous rule which was suggested by the United States.

Another columnist in Sawt Al Shaab said that the water question and other problems that would arise in the Middle East region in the coming years should be given priority during the peace talks.

Samih Ma'atah said that 85 per cent of the water resources of the Arab World are under the control of non-Arab nations, like Turkey, Ethiopia and Uganda, while many areas of the Arab land are still under Israeli occupation.

The writer said the Arabs should ensure that their rights to water resources at the multi-lateral talks, receive interna-

tional guarantees.

Otherwise, he said, should the water issues remain outstanding, the Middle East region is bound to witness types of wars different from those of the present. The writer also said that Israel, through its occupation of Arab land and its continuing expansion at the expense of Arabs, will force it to carry out further expansions to ensure sufficient water supplies for the growing population.

A columnist in Al Rai Arabic daily advocated solidarity among Arab countries and said that without solidarity the Arabs will remain in total disarray.

A speech by the president of the United Arab Emirates last week calling on the Arabs to embark on a new chapter in inter-Arab relations is very encouraging and came at a crucial moment when the Arabs are struggling to mend their fences and to unify their stand vis-a-vis the common challenges, said Mahmud Al Rimawi.

The writer said solidarity does not mean that the Arab leaders should only issue statements of support, but rather take practical steps towards ending differences and opening new chapter of fruitful cooperation.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab supported Rimawi's views and stressed that the Arab countries' attention should be first directed towards Iraq.

It is unreasonable to see American and European peace activists, like Ramsey Clark and the Harvard University team, conducting research on the post-war situation in Iraq, and urging world community to end the embargo on the Iraqi people, and not enough to hear U.N. envoy Prince Seidrouddin Aga Khan issuing one appeal after another demanding that the Iraqi people be allowed to lead a normal

life, while the Arabs are keeping silent and doing nothing to alleviate the sufferings of their Iraqi brothers and sisters.

Tareq Masarweh, who writes for Al Rai daily, said that the Iraqis are to receive \$120 million from their frozen assets in Britain because they released a British businessman accused of bribery. He said that it seems that the British and the West in general understand the language of force to ensure the restoration of their rights.

The writer urged the Iraqis to use all means available at their disposal to put an end to the West's arrogance and end the embargo on the Iraqi people.

Turning to domestic issues Fakhri Kassar said that the government decision to offer a JD 10 cost of living allowance to its employees was a welcome development. The employees have been facing difficult times trying to make both ends meet in view of the soaring prices of almost all commodities, said the writer in Al Rai.

But Kassar said that such step can by no means rescue the Jordanian citizens from the real and chronic issues of inflation and soaring cost of living. He said that the government should find solutions for unemployment, for the soaring prices and for the deteriorating economic conditions and, by so doing, it can provide a more decent life for all citizens.

Tackling the new role of the Lower House of Parliament, Mohammad Daoud said in Al Dustour that the House members should be careful to avoid all the negative elements that marred the previous parliamentary session.

The writer urged deputies to direct their attention to enhancing political pluralism by endorsing the political parties law and to deal with the chronic issues plaguing the nation.

LETTERS

For the sake of truth

To the Editor:

With great interest I read the editorial: Timely debate — a view from the country which is located "on the sunny side of the Alps," which was published in Jordan Times on Dec. 4, 1991. The writer was trying desperately to send to the Jordanians a message using the situation in the disintegrating Yugoslavia, but I must stress that, due to the lack of understanding of the real situation among Yugoslav nations, his message missed the target by many miles. Before making any additional comments regarding the editorial mentioned above, I wish to point out some important, but obviously unknown facts about the intentions of Slovene nation (we are not a Yugoslav ethnic group or a sect or God knows what) by quoting the part of the speech delivered by the foreign minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr. Dimitrij Rupel at the Society for Foreign Policy in Vienna, Austria. I quote:

"Yugoslavia has been an unstable state arrangement from its very beginning in 1918 when it was founded as an improvised and enforced answer to the problems of its predecessor, the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Yugoslavia inherited all the Austro-Hungarian problems and has solved none of them. Problems remained everywhere where multi-national states were formed, new or miniature 'Austro-Hungaries,' among which Yugoslavia belongs: a country of seven different nations, six republics, five different languages, three religions, two alphabets, and, if I may add the latest twist, two different social systems — communist in the southeast and democratic in the northwest.

I'm not sure if President Wilson is to be blamed for not understanding the national question. Where could the Americans get experience of multi-national states when the United States, somewhat like modern Germany, is a nation state? And Yugoslavia is a state of nations! There is hardly a convincing argument why such different nations should live together in one state.

This fatal dilemma was observed almost a hundred years ago by the Slovene writer Ivan Cankar who lived in Vienna for almost ten years. In his essay "Slovenes and Yugoslavs," he said that while the southern Slav nations were related by blood, the Slovene culture was much closer to that of its Italian and Austrian neighbours than to the rest of Yugoslavia.

Of course, Slovenia is not leaving Yugoslavia to become an island in Europe, some kind of idiosyncratic state in the middle of a Europe which is integrating. Neither is Slovenia leaving Yugoslavia because of egotism or spite. It is true that Slovenia is completely exhausted by the blows of the Yugoslav military and of an economic system which includes such interesting features as the undetected and unpunished raid by the Serbian Bank on the Yugoslav monetary system for one and a half billion dollars. The essential reason for the Slovene national desire for its state and independence is not primarily that we have become tired of tolerating Yugoslavia's burdens, but the fact that we, like all nations in the world, have the right of self-determination. This right does not exist if it cannot be realised. We had to be satisfied with unrealised rights under communism. Slovenes decided to use this right during the plebiscite of Dec. 23, 1990, not because of the numerous problems, but because of their European outlook. We cannot be in Europe with Yugoslavia. We have proof of this with Yugoslavia's applications for membership in the Council of Europe, in EFTA, in the OECD. The Hungarians and Czechoslovaks were accepted and they are accepting the Poles now, while Slovenes feel like prisoners in Yugoslavia."

I do sincerely hope that the writer of the editorial has now understood why we, Slovenes, are fighting for our full independence and international recognition. The words like nationalism, sectarianism, ethnicism are very hard and highly unjust, because, like nations in the Middle East, we have the same right to self-determination. Therefore I strongly suggest to everyone, before trying to make the comparison between the situation in former Yugoslavia and the region where Jordan is located, to go back to the book and study the problems in the other part of the world very carefully.

Only then he will be able to understand and to respect our decision for an independent state, as we, the Slovenes, respect and support the struggle and desire of the peoples of the region for their independence and sovereignty.

Marcel Koprol,
Director General Chamber of Economy of Slovenia,
Representative Office for the Middle East,
P.O. Box 5088,
Amman-Jordan.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

John Sununu — president's pugnacious lieutenant

By David Nagy
Reuter

WASHINGTON — White House Chief of Staff John Sununu is known around Washington as a hard-charging political brawler unafraid to stomp on toes, make enemies or provoke curses as he goes about his work.

Those qualities, which saw him through many a scrape during his impressive political rise, proved Mr. Sununu's undoing on Tuesday as he submitted his resignation in a letter admitting he had become a liability to President George Bush.

"In politics, especially during the seasons of a political campaign, perceptions that can be

effectively dealt with at other times can be — and will be — converted into real political negatives," he said in a "dear Mr. president" letter released while he and President Bush were on a political trip.

Mr. Bush said Mr. Sununu would remain on staff as a counselor with cabinet rank through March 1, 1992. The resignation takes effect on Dec. 15.

Calls for the ouster of Mr. Sununu, 52, a conservative Republican and former governor of New Hampshire, reportedly came from all sides — a kind of backhanded compliment to a pugnacious man who prided himself on his intellect, his stomach for conflict, his single-minded decisiveness and his refusal to suffer

anyone he thought a fool.

These included both congressional Democrats who dubbed him "the pit bull" and fellow Republicans and Mr. Bush partisans, who blamed him for Mr. Bush's declining poll ratings and perceived go-slow approach on U.S. economic woes and domestic ills.

Mr. Sununu, of Lebanese extraction on his father's side, was born on July 2, 1939, in Havana, Cuba. He grew up in New York and obtained a doctorate in mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

While a student he founded an engineering consultancy that em-

ployed 150 people by the time he graduated. He joined Tufts University at age 27 and became assistant dean of the College of Engineering two years later.

He moved to New Hampshire in 1969, partly to escape high taxes in Massachusetts, and became involved in the state's conservative politics. Elected governor in 1983, he changed the state's deficit into a surplus before leaving in 1989.

In February 1988 it was Mr. Sununu who as New Hampshire governor stepped forward to revitalize Mr. Bush's floundering presidential campaign by guiding him to victory in the state's crucial presidential primary.

A stocky, bull-necked man with a sharp mind and tongue, he was signed on by Mr. Bush for the campaign and then as White House Chief of Staff, in effect the guardian of the president's door, controlling access to him and shaping his agenda.

Mr. Sununu was already controversial for bullying in his New England state, where the powerful local newspaper dubbed him derisively "King John." His style problems continued in Washington, where congressional leaders and White House staffers felt his lash.

Complaints extended beyond style into substance, including allegations among Republicans

worried about a building voter backlash that the conservative Sununu, suspicious of all federal intervention in the economy, was responsible for Mr. Bush's refusal to attempt bold, quick economic remedies.

Mr. Sununu often dismissed such accusations with a sneer, but recently infuriated Mr. Bush partisans by shifting the blame on one count to the president, saying Mr. Bush, not he, originated the market-shaking suggestion of

lower credit card rates.

All this followed an ethics controversy last April when it was learned he was using a military jet costing \$3,495 an hour for personal trips as well as official business.

The White House said there was nothing improper about the flights but nonetheless tightened its travel rules.

Mr. Sununu is married and has eight children with his wife Nancy.



John Sununu

U.N. issues statement of solidarity with Palestinians

Following is the text of the statement by the president of the General Assembly, Samir S. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia) on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People:

Today we commemorate the International day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Fourteen years ago, by its resolution 32/40 B, the General Assembly decided to commemorate this day, the 19th of November, as an annual observance, in recognition of the need to strengthen and consolidate international support for the Palestinian people. The designation by the United Nations of this day as a world-wide occasion for the reaffirmation of International Solidarity with the Palestinian People reflects the international conviction that peace in the Middle East region must be based on the attainment of justice for the Palestinian people. This day of solidarity symbolises the great importance which the General Assembly, in particular, attaches to the question of Palestine, the full attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the need to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East.

The problem of Palestine has been a major concern of the United Nations ever since its establishment, and this organisation bears an historic responsibility towards ensuring its just settlement and a full restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. For over four decades now, the Palestinian people have been struggling resolutely for the recovery of their fundamental rights, including their right to self-determination. The United Nations has an indispensable role to play in this respect, especially in view of the fact that during the past 46 years of its existence this world organisation has adopted numerous resolutions in the General Assembly and the Security Council on the question of Palestine, most of which still remain to be implemented.

At a time when the world is witnessing a major relaxation in international tensions and when solutions to many regional conflicts are being facilitated by the new positive international climate, it is incumbent upon all of us, and in particular for the United Nations, to keep the search for a political solution of the question of Palestine high on the international agenda. Now more than ever before, it is imperative

for the United Nations to play a central role in this process. It is urgent and indispensable for this organisation to see to the implementation of its resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, particularly resolutions 242 and 338 of the Security Council which, in the final analysis, represent the basis for an internationally acceptable solution. It must be emphasised that, while we seek the support of the United Nations, we must also abide by the resolutions and decisions of the United Nations.

The important positive developments that are currently taking place in the international arena reflect the aspiration of peoples to live in a world where peace, security and justice prevail. The progress made in this field at the international and regional levels provides a sound basis for solution to all sensitive international problems, including the question of Palestine, which lies at the heart of the Middle East conflict.

It is imperative that the atmosphere of peace should extend to this region, so that it ceases to be a source of tension that might undermine the positive changes taking place in the world today. This objective can be achieved only through the application of United Nations resolutions pertaining to the occupation of territories by force, to the illegal practices which violate the United Nations charter and international conventions, and full exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable national rights.

May I take this opportunity to commend the committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and its distinguished chairperson, Ambassador Absa Claude Diallo of Senegal, for their continuing efforts to help in promoting a just solution of the problem of Palestine in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The observance of this international day of solidarity will once again reaffirm to the Palestinian people that the United Nations remains committed to its resolution and decisions on Palestine and to the realisation of their inalienable rights.

I should like to take this opportunity, madame chairperson, to extend to you and to your esteemed committee my sincere thanks for your great service to the objectives of the United Nations, and to the community of nations at large, and to express my best wishes for a successful conclusion of your endeavours.

Fadlallah: No hostage

(Continued from page 1)

improve relations in the Middle East, with Syria, with Iran, with Lebanon, and trying to be an honest broker."

The former Middle East bureau chief for Associated Press has been undergoing medical checks and debriefing at a U.S. military hospital in Wiesbaden, Germany. He gave a news conference in a cinema at Lindsey air station, adjoining the hospital. "I would clearly have loved to have gotten out of there and at the beginning, when it was pretty shocking, I mean, frankly I would not care if we had given them an H-bomb just to get me out of that place," he said.

"But when I settled down, had more time to think about it, had time to deal with real values involved, I am real happy we're all out, except for the two Germans."

In one of three video tapes released by the kidnappers during his captivity, Mr. Anderson criticised the United States for not doing enough to release the hostages. Mr. Anderson, 44, said the tapes had been made under duress and he did not think any-

body would take them seriously. "I was a hostage. I was told what to do," said Mr. Anderson, who was flanked by his sister Peggy Say and AP General Manager Lou Boccia. "The reason I did them was to tell my family I was alive."

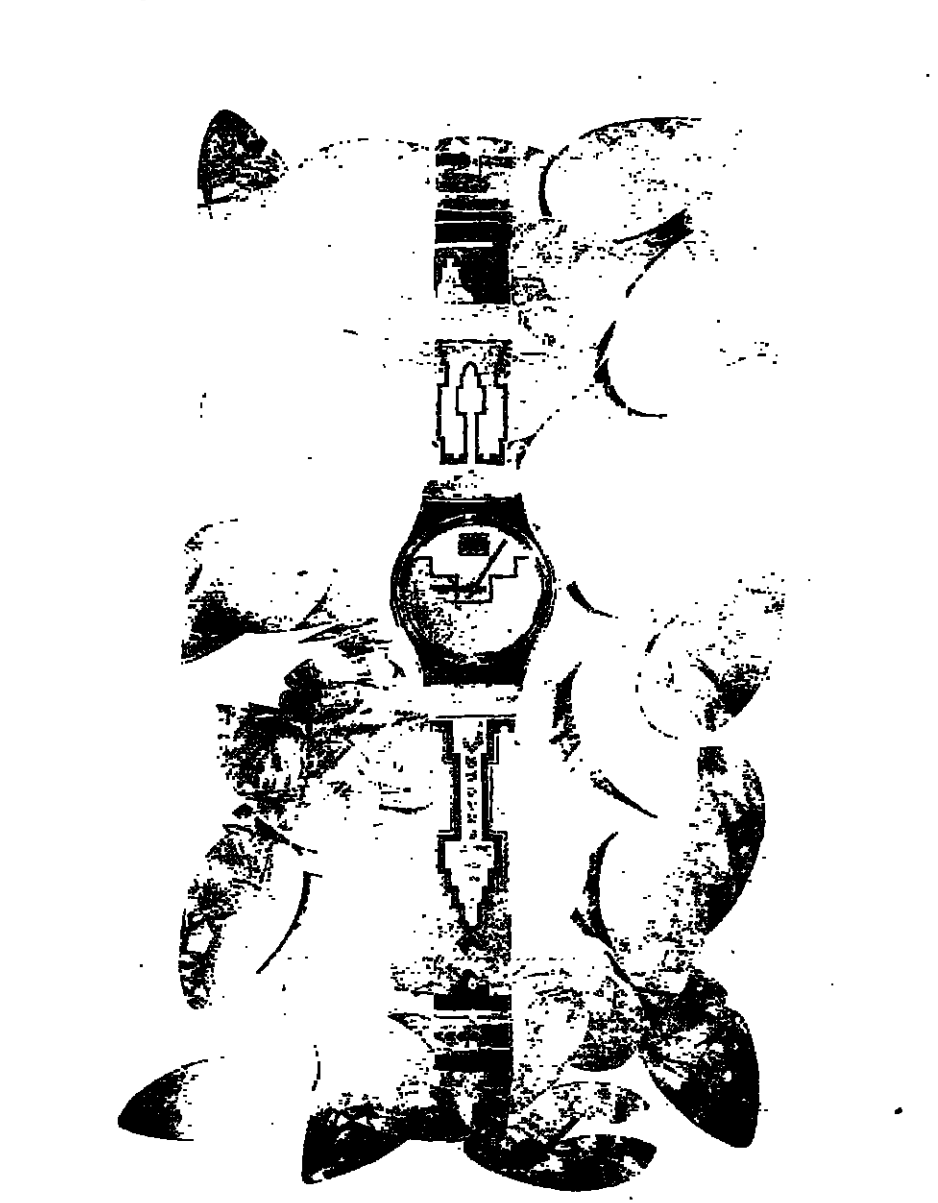
Asked if he wanted retaliation, he said: "I don't want to think about that now. I am out, I am free. I don't hate them. I am certainly not grateful to them. I believe they were wrong... I don't want to think about it right now."

President Bush raised the possibility on Thursday that the United States might somehow try to bring the kidnappers to justice.

Asked if he thought a military operation aimed at freeing the hostages would have had any chance of success, Mr. Anderson replied:

"I don't really think so. I think they'd have had to be real damn good to get in that room and disarm the guards before somebody got killed. While I would have dearly liked to be rescued, I always thought that if they tried, somebody was going to get killed."

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Barcelona edge out champions as old rivals clash

LONDON (R) — Barcelona exacted sweet revenge over European Men's Club Basketball Champions Slobodna Dalmatija with a thrilling 80-79 victory in the semifinal series.

A last-ditch free throw by star forward Epi gave Barcelona a triumph over the team who when previously known as Jugoplastika Split won three successive European titles and beat the Spanish club in two finals including last season's.

But the Yugoslav are a much

changed outfit since April and, like all the Yugoslav teams, have been forced to play their home games in Spain. The defeat was their third in four games and the crown is clearly wobbling.

The physically stronger champions dominated the first half, leading by as much as 15 points and holding a 42-32 edge at half-time.

But everything changed in the third period, Epi leading the Catalans ahead 66-65 in the 33rd minute.

With only seconds to go and the champions ahead 79-78, Epi scored the deciding points after a foul by Perasovic.

Cibona Zagreb remained unbeaten in Group A although they struggled to an extra-time away 100-93 victory over French club Olympique d'Antibes.

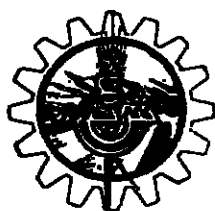
The Croats had an uphill battle after the French champions took a 20-point lead in just 28 minutes of play.

But the Riviera club had to call in their reserves when their best

marksmen, including American Lee Johnson who scored 21 points, had to leave the court with four fouls.

Zagreb then took control thanks to Zdravko Radulovic, who scored 42 points to bring his team to 84-84 and force extra time.

The top match in Group B pitted Joventut Badalona against Partizan Belgrade. The Spaniards, with home advantage, won 79-76 and are the only unbeaten team in the group.



السلطنة الأردنية الهاشمية

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

The Arab Potash Company Limited

Arab Potash Project

Contract No. APC/41/91 & Contract No. APC/42/91

Advertisement for pre-qualification

The Arab Potash Company Limited (A.P.C.) of Amman, Jordan intends to implement a Brackish Water Supply System to provide additional process water to supply the major part of the present and future industrial water needs of the refinery and also construct a new jetty to account for the long term fluctuation of the level of the Dead Sea. The required works are located in the Potash Projects Area on the southern end of the Dead Sea, about 230km north of the port of Aqaba and 200km south of Amman.

For each contract, only firms and joint ventures (consortia) who have been prequalified will be invited to tender. It is presently anticipated that tender documents will be issued to prequalified applicants in February 1992, and that tender will be submitted for both contracts in April 1992. The works required under the two contracts are as follows:

CONTRACT APC/41/91 — A jetty, about 180m long by 22m wide overall, requiring about 2800t of tubular steel, piling and 500t of structural steelwork.

Proposals for alternative financing arrangements will be considered; applicants may put forward such proposals in their applications for pre-qualification.

CONTRACT APC/42/91 — About 45km of pipework, most of which is to be suitable for hot brackish water and is expected to be 500mm diameter and either GRP or ductile iron, for an additional water supply system; installation of borehole pumps at the wellfield; and a reinforced concrete reservoir (5,000m³ capacity), earthworks for a reservoir (35,000m³ capacity) and a small pumping station at the refinery.

Applicants wishing to be pre-qualified and invited to tender for any of these contracts may collect the pre-qualification document, which contains further information, from either of the following:

Arab Potash Company
P.O. Box 1470
Amman-Jordan
Fax No.: 962-3377125
F.A.O. : Mr. I. Gammoh
Projects Manager

Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners Ltd,
427 London Road
Earley
Reading RG6 1BL
England
Fax No.: 44-734-491054
F.A.O. : Mr. G.J. Brice
Director

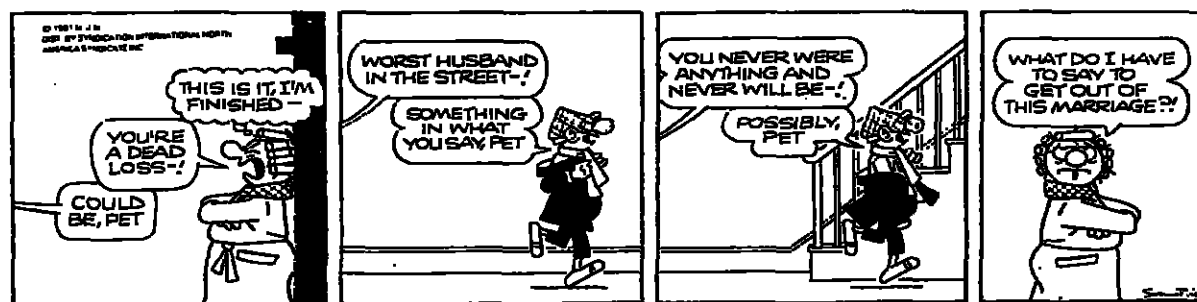
The closing date for receipt of completed pre-qualification documents by A.P.C. and Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners is January 20.

A.Y. Ensour
Managing Director
The Arab Potash Co., Ltd.,

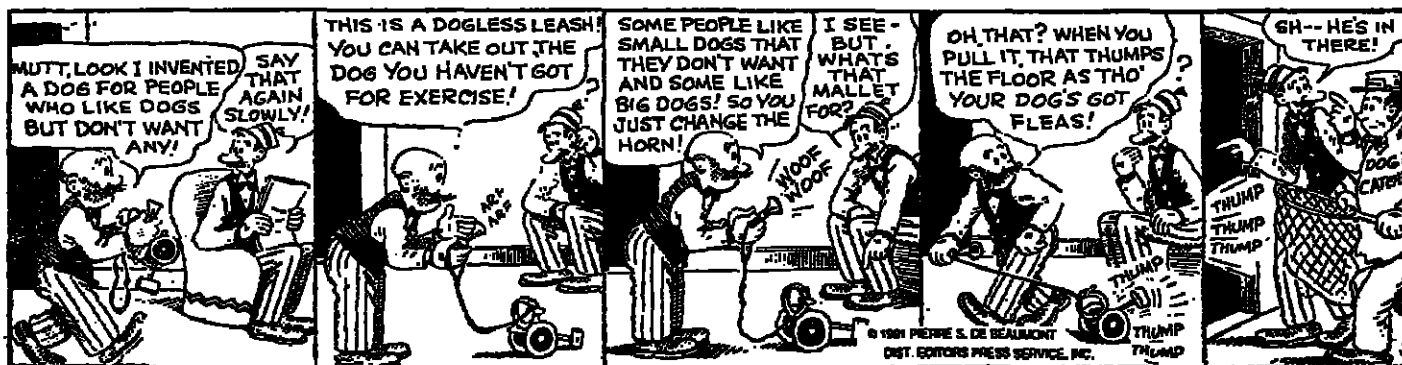
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



JORDAN BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

By Aileen Bamayan

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — To the disappointment of hundreds of Al Ahli fans who came to cheer their titleholding team on a rainy and cold afternoon, Al Ahli Wednesday lost the final match of the first division basketball championship's preliminary round.

Al Orthodoxy played with confidence and a determination to get the title back as they beat Al Ahli 74-60 in their match played at the Sports Palace court at Al Hussein Youth City.

Although the outcome of the match does not affect the standings of the two teams — as they are due to play alongside Al Ahli and Al Jazireh in the second round which will determine who gets to keep the title — nevertheless the loss was an early warning to Al Ahli's coach and players. It showed that playing the way they did Wednesday will not enable them to retain the title. On the other hand, Al Orthodoxy's win further increased their confidence of getting back at the top spot.

Al Orthodoxy led 10-1 in the 6th minute and played in a more confident way than ever before. Meanwhile Al Ahli mainly depended on their usually excellent shooting ability to score but were unsuccessful as Marwan Al Saeedi gave it his best in offensive rebounding to follow up his teammates' disastrous shooting, especially in the absence of key guard Naser Bushma.

This resulted in a series of turnovers which Al Orthodoxy took advantage of to expand the difference as Murad Barakat scored 23 points to win the first half 38-23.

Al Orthodoxy led 61-43 in the 12th minute. Al Ahli failed to catch up as Al Orthodoxy kept their lead at 70-48 in the 17th minute. Al Ahli faced increasing difficulty in penetrating Al Orthodoxy's tight defence and could not effectively stop their rivals from scoring.

They kept up their attempt at narrowing the difference but were largely unsuccessful apart from playmaker Samir Murqus who put up a great effort and scored 17 points to lessen the difference at 72-58. But Al Ahli lost the match 74-60 to their all-time rivals Al Orthodoxy.

In this week's other matches played Tuesday, Al Jazireh beat Al Ashrafiah in the match played at Al Hassan Sports City in Irbid.

Although scoring was close at the beginning, Al Jazireh won the first half 48-23. Al Ashrafiah's defence could not effectively hamper Al Jazireh from scoring as Al Jazireh scored a big win of 95-56. Meanwhile at Al Ahli court in Amman, Al Hussein scored a difficult 71-68 win over Al Watan.

The match was quite competitive as both teams alternately scored and Al Watan won the first half 34-32.

Al Hussein played a faster second half and tried to limit Al Watan from scoring by a tight defence as they managed to beat Al Watan by a three point difference.

In a match played at Al Orthodoxy court, Al Karak stood up to Al Jazireh but lost the first half by just seven points 32-25.

Al Jazireh however were not content with the slim difference and played man-to-man defence to successfully block Al Karak's less experienced players. Al Jazireh won the match 89-45.

The second and decisive round of the championship is due to begin in the coming week, according to the schedule which will be announced by the Jordan Basketball Federation.

Standings

	W	L	SF	SA	Pts
Al Orthodoxy	7	—	717	384	14
Al Ahli	6	1	732	380	13
Al Jazireh	5	2	582	497	12
Al Hussein	4	3	578	541	11
Al Karak	3	4	587	542	10
Al Watan	2	5	546	599	9
Al Ashrafiah	1	6	391	770	8
Al Karak	—	7	297	669	7

Top troubleshooter tipped for U.K. premier league

LONDON (R) — A leading industrial troubleshooter was tipped as the first chairman of English soccer's new premier league on the day a claim was made that some clubs were having second thoughts about the venture. Former head of Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), Sir John Harvey-Johnes, 67, a flamboyant, no-nonsense figure, is thought to be a leading candidate for the new league chairmanship. An announcement is expected Sunday.

Meanwhile, influential Newcastle soccer club director Gordon McKeage said some clubs were admitting privately they may have been too hasty quitting the Football League for the Football Association-inspired premier league.

"Mr. McKeage, chairman of a six-man committee charged with shaping the new league, warned 'chaos' would reign at the start of next season unless critical decisions were taken soon.

"There is still nobody representing the premier league or the F.A. who has any authority to make decisions and that continuing uncertainty is damaging for everybody," said Mr. McKeage.

"I've heard that a number of division one clubs are beginning to question the decision they have made to go. They are realising that the path of the promised land is a hazardous one."

When agreement on a premier league was finally reached in September a spokesman for the first division clubs said: "The hard work starts now. There are commercial negotiations to begin, the constitution of the premier league to establish, a rulebook to be drawn up and the relationship with the F.A. to establish."

Players' Union chief executive Gordon Taylor warned over the weekend his members were prepared to strike unless they were involved in discussions within the next three months.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TANNAN HIRSH
©1991 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

KNOW YOUR CARD COMBINATIONS

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

♠ K 2

♥ K 7 6 4

♦ Q 9 3 2

♣ A 10 7

WEST

♠ J 8 7 4

♥ Q 8 3

♦ J 10 9 5

♣ 10 7

SOUTH

♠ A Q

♥ A 2

♦ A K J 8 6 5

♣ Q 4 3

The bidding:

South West North East

1 Pass 1 Pass

3 NT Pass 6 NT Pass

Pass Pass

Opening lead: Four of ♠

This hand was submitted by a reader. "I play by the seat of my pants," our correspondent states. "I felt that West had the jack of clubs, so with only 11 tricks in sight, I tried for the 12th by leading a low club to the ten. As you can see, that didn't work. Partner said I should have led a club to the ace and another back to the queen. I claimed it was purely a guess as to which defender held what. Who's right?"

First, let's compliment South on the jump to three no trump. With 20 points, a hand that is essentially balanced and an excellent source of tricks in the diamond suit, three no trump was an intelligent bid.

However, the writer does have a peculiar notion of the function of the seat of one's pants. It's there to sit on, not reason with! The situation in the club suit is covered in all textbooks on play, and is often mis-handled even though it recurs often. While it is true that West is as likely as East to hold the jack of clubs, correct technique is to try to take advantage of a favorable location of either the king or the jack. Proper management will give you two chances to land the slam, not one!

Declarer should win the opening spade lead in dummy with the king and immediately lead a low club toward the queen. If East holds the king, the slam is made there and then. But if West wins the king and perseveres in spades, all is not yet lost. South wins and runs the red-suit winners, ending in hand, then leads a club to the ten. That will generate a 12th trick if West holds the jack. If not, there was no way to make the slam.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY DECEMBER 7, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Flighter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Turning difficult situations tactfully to your own credit comes easy today as the Moon in Capricorn sextiles Venus. Your reasoning ability is logical and especially clear at the moment.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is your day to think out a course of action that can bring you much more of this world's goods and in a manner that keeps you interested.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You are most conscientious now and are also aware of what your limitations and restrictions are and what you must do to really make a new course for yourself.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A longtime and older friend who knows what he is talking about will show you what you can do in order to gain release from some condition you don't wish further in your life.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You are now able to find the official who can help you gain some personal ambition that has been very difficult for you to obtain.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Now you have all kinds of pressure to accept a new arrangement that will solve and settle some vocational duty which is the right thing for you now.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September

22) Even though you are held down by some responsibility of a longtime nature you still are able to see how your horizons can be expanded.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is your day to get at promises you have made to a partner and that require a considerable amount of work on your part to do in exact manner.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is your time to make sure your associates understand the task you have to do and that this is the reason you can't go fluffing off with them.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have a good idea for some fun and pleasure that can be yours but it requires a great deal of effort on your part to get it done.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Take members of your family to some amusement place where you can join in the games, sports and recreations that do appeal to you and them.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Whatever you would like to do that requires getting out in the world of activity is good to plan now even though it is necessary for you to handle family affairs.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) There are some highly effective means now by which you can see how to get more but it is also necessary for you to convince your allies.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



"I found a way to make leftovers more exciting!"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FAHFC

OMIDI

CURPSE

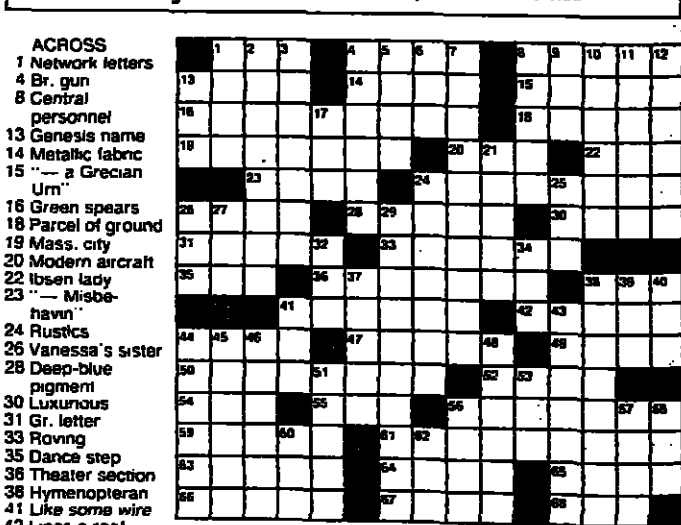
THELME

Answer here:

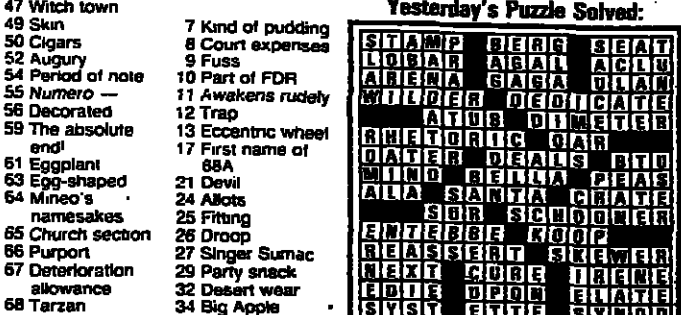
Yesterday's Jumbles: DUNCE ERUPT INLAID TROUGH

Answer: Skating is a sport in which many end up --- "END UP!"

THE Daily Crossword by Valentina Barnes



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



45 Confess
46 Ter
48 Unpretentious
51 — Mongolia
53 Rabbit's land
56 Competent
58 Cardinal sin
59 Sarcophagus
60 Prince Hirobumi
62 Outdated acronym

World Bank lends India \$500m

NEW DELHI (R) — The World Bank has approved a \$500 million loan for cash-strapped India to support ambitious reforms of the state-dominated economy, a bank spokesman said Friday.

The banks executive board said in Washington Thursday another \$400 million would be allocated next year to help finance reforms such as a plan to retrain workers who lose their jobs in a revamping of India's bloated public sector.

The \$500 million structural adjustment loan (SAL) is the first such loan the World Bank has given to India. The spokesman said \$300 million would be disbursed immediately and the remainder next year.

Structural adjustment loans are

given to support governments confronted with a balance of payments crisis and are not tied to specific projects.

The SAL was intended to help India to relax severe import restrictions, imposed earlier this year because its foreign exchange reserves were nearly exhausted and overseas banks had refused new lending, the spokesman said.

India's \$71 billion debt is the third highest in the developing world.

Delhi borrowed \$4 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) this year to cope with its external payments crisis. The money came with a list of painful reforms.

Within weeks of taking office

in June, Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao launched a series of ambitious reforms to an economy steeped in decades of socialist dogma.

Prodded by the IMF, the government devalued the rupee by 23 per cent against major currencies, made deep spending cuts in the 1991/92 budget (April-March), overhauled trade policy, abolished most industrial licences, and opened up foreign investment to once-banned multinationals.

The remaining \$200 million of the SAL and the \$400 million project loan will be conditional on new reforms in the 1992/93 budget, the bank spokesman said.

The \$200 million SAL instalment will probably be tied to more trade deregulation, he said. India's import tariffs are among the world's highest — up to 700 per cent for some goods.

The \$400 million project loan may be allocated to a proposed national renewal fund that the government wants to set up as a safety net for workers who lose their jobs in a planned reorganisation of chronically indebted public firms.

"The idea would be that some of this would be available to offset the social cost of India's economic adjustment," the spokesman said. "But the specifics have yet to be worked out with the government."

Yemen Airways drops Saudis

ADEN (R) — Yemen plans to buy all Saudi shares in Yemen Airways by next Jan. 1, the company's chairman Mohammad Ahmad Al Himi was quoted as saying.

Saudi Arabia, Yemen's main aid donor until last year's Gulf crisis, had paid all the 260 million Yemeni riyals (\$21.67 million) of

the company's capital but owned only 49 per cent of its shares.

"The liquidation of the Saudi partner's share in Yemen Airways will be done on Jan. 1 and the company will become 100 per cent Yemeni," Mr. Himi told the weekly Aden magazine.

Mr. Himi did not say what Sanaa would pay, if anything, to

Saudi Arabia. He said the company's board members would meet later this month with an unnamed international firm to agree on final procedures for the takeover.

Yemen Airways was established in 1975 with an initial paid-up capital of 130 million riyals (\$10.83 million).

The company operates five

Boeing 707 and 737 aircraft on international routes and two smaller planes on domestic routes.

Saudi Arabia, angered by Yemen's pro-Iraq policy during the Gulf crisis, has frozen its financial aid and expelled hundreds of thousands of Yemenis from the oil-rich kingdom.

Mirror brands Maxwell a liar



Robert Maxwell

mysterious death, overboard from his yacht off the Canary Islands, the accountants moved in to salvage what they could from under a pile of debt exceeding \$2.5 billion.

"The Lie, cried Friday's splash headline on his own cherished Daily Mirror.

Its story alleged that Maxwell lied to its finance director, Lawrence Guest, just before his death when Mr. Guest challenged him about a sum worth about \$80 million which seemed to have vanished from Mirror coffers.

It conjured images of a drama worthy of the tragic stage as the Czech-born entrepreneur — he was an orphan of the holocaust — spent his last days juggling assets among his convoluted web of companies as creditors circled around him.

The Mirror printed a secret Guest memorandum saying he was convinced that Mirror's resources were being used to support other parts of the group "but I have no proof."

Maxwell, the newspaper said, told him not to lose sleep.

The British fraud squad is investigating transactions in the Mirror Group.

In another disclosure, the Maxwell-owned U.S. publishing House of Macmillan Inc. said Thursday it had discovered that its stake in language school Ber-

litz International Inc. had been transferred out of its control.

Sons and heirs Kevin and Ian Maxwell had triggered a rapid break-up of the Maxwell empire earlier Thursday, a month to the day after their father died, by summoning administrators to take charge of his key, private holding companies in Britain.

Now the family will have to sell their majority stakes in the big publicly-quoted companies of the crumbled empire, Mirror Group Newspapers PLC and Maxwell Communication Corp. PLC.

Also up for auction are private interests ranging from market research companies to football clubs — "a giant jumble sale" in the words of a rival newspaper, the Daily Star.

Financial analysts said it was an open question whether asset sales could match the debt, accumulated in recent years as Maxwell bought up U.S. companies including the New York Daily News and Macmillan.

The New York Daily News has moved to defend itself by filing for court protection, the U.S. equivalent of going into administration.

Editor James Willse said the filing for chapter 11 bankruptcy, which puts a shield up against creditors and allows a business to continue operating, was a prevent the paper being swept away in a

"landslide."

But the European newspaper, launched less than two years ago as Maxwell's dream of a pan-European voice, said that Friday's could be its final issue unless a buyer could be found.

The daily Mirror appealed in an editorial for a sympathetic buyer who would retain its traditional role for the British opposition Labour Party.

The Mirror is a legend among British tabloids. Nearly a century old and with circulation around three million, it is the second-biggest selling British daily after the Rupert Murdoch-owned tabloid Sun.

Since it is the only mass-circulation British newspaper to support Labour, its fate has political as well as human and corporate implications.

Maxwell, after fleeing the Nazis as a youth, won a medal fighting against them in the British army during World War II.

But a 1972 British government report branded him unfit to run a public company.

The Economist magazine this week says the biggest question about the whole Maxwell saga is how he subsequently got away with his dealings for so long.

Maxwell, a prolific litigant, regularly slapped libel writs on his critics in recent years.

Federal Reserve cuts U.S. interest rates

NEW YORK (R) — The U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) cut a key short-term interest rate Friday in an attempt to get the flagging U.S. economy back on track, economists said.

Economists had expected the action because of the severely weak employment report for November.

The Fed, the U.S. central bank, injected \$3 billion into the banking system, sending the key federal funds rate down to 4.50 per cent from a previous target of 4.75 per cent.

"They've eased to 4-1/2 per cent," said Steven Wood, director of financial markets research at Bank of America, shortly after the Fed move.

The rate, closely controlled by the Fed, is the amount banks charge one another for short-term loans. Changes in the rate influence everything from the cost of a home mortgage to a business loan.

The U.S. Labour Department reported Friday that the November unemployment rate was steady at 6.8 per cent, but the economy lost 241,000 non-farm jobs — the most since March, when the recession was severe, and far higher than economists' expectations.

The Fed has steadily cut rates for more than a year in an effort to boost the flagging economy. Lower rates should entice consumers and businesses to borrow and spend, but so far the cuts have done little to boost the economy.

Poor economy mars Christmas fun

Predictions grow of new U.S. fall into recession

NEW YORK (R) — The prospect of the U.S. economy again sinking into recession is gaining ground in the darkening economic landscape, with analysts saying a decline may have begun in the fourth quarter after a brief recovery.

The Federal Reserve (Fed) and White House — formerly optimists about recovery after the year-long recession — now sound worried that the economy has taken a turn for the worse.

Robert Parry, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, said Wednesday that fourth-quarter growth could be flat or down after two quarters of expansion.

President George Bush also sounded pessimistic, acknowledging what many Americans have been saying for months despite talks of an economic rebound.

"These are tough times and many Americans are worried and looking for a sign from Washington that someone cares, understands what's happening," Mr. Bush said.

The new outlook may force the Fed to cut interest rates once again to give the economy a lift.

"The Fed will probably ease again right after the employment report Friday," said John Williams, a managing director at Bankers Trust Co. The Federal Reserve Board — the U.S. central bank — has been lowering rates over the past year and a half.

Economists predict a rise in the November unemployment rate to 6.9 per cent from 6.8 per cent in October and a loss of 31,000 non-farm jobs — figures more typical of recession than expansion.

Private economists have been split over the prospects of another recession after a brief recovery, but now the adherents of the so-called double-dip theory are growing.

Everyone agrees the economy

fell into recession in July 1990, stayed flat during the Gulf war and then struggled back to its feet last spring.

But by summer it grew weak-kneed, and it staggered this fall. Now many experts say the economy is on the verge of falling down once more.

"We're due for a double-dip," said economist Cary Leabey of Lehman Government Securities Inc.

For many it is just a question of timing, with another contraction expected to begin in the final quarter of this year or by the first quarter of 1992.

The government Wednesday said the nation's gross domestic product for the third quarter showed 1.7 per cent growth, the second quarter of growth after the recession.

Mr. Williams said he expects "plus or minus one per cent (gross domestic product) in the fourth and first quarters."

Michael Moran, chief economist at Daiwa America Securities Inc., does not believe the economy will dip into recession again but rather grow at a meagre 0.7 per cent pace in the fourth quarter.

"It's slow, it's disappointing, it's the type of growth that elicits easing from the Fed," he said.

But if Washington gets serious about an economy-boosting fiscal package such as a tax cut, the Fed might sit tight, Mr. Moran said.

"They may be setting the stage for potential fiscal adjustment next year," Mr. Moran said. "If that's the case it could make the Fed more cautious."

Meanwhile, the Christmas shopping season has begun in a cautious mood, as economists watch to see if they will open their wallets to boost the weak economy.

The annual ritual of purchases for holiday gift-giving is a crucial indicator of consumer confidence, the engine that drives the U.S. economy.

A day after the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday, a traditional litmus test for the Christmas shopping season — sales were up slightly but retailers said they had to promote heavily and extend hours to lure customers.

Stores across the country opened early and discounted merchandise to keep the cash registers ringing.

A survey of shoppers and sales clerks published last week in the New York Times reported shoppers seemed determined to keep a tight grip on their money, spending less on each gift and sharply reducing the number of people they were buying presents for.

"You don't see the holiday cheer in people's faces going shopping that you used to see," a 32-year-old shopper told the paper. "It's more like a depressed look. It's just not as fun as it used to be."

The fact that consumers are feeling a little distressed about the economy and their personal fortunes is not surprising, but the depth of the negative feelings caught some by surprise.

The Conference Board, a business research group that tracks consumer moods, reported Tuesday their economic confidence dropped to its lowest level in 11 years in October.

Consumers fuel two-thirds of U.S. economic activity through spending on goods and services. The choking off of spending as the vital holiday season approaches signals a likely further slowdown in economic activity.

Some analysts wouldn't be surprised to see the economy turn into recession again, achieving what is called a "double dip."

"Far from leading the economy out of recession, consumers are leading us back into a second dip," said Lawrence Hunter, an economist with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Some analysts think the double dip already have occurred with the economy continuing to operate in negative territory through, at least, the first quarter of 1992.

"Retailers are very pessimistic," said Ira Kalish of Management Horizons, a retail consulting firm, adding that "they are promoting quite a bit and quite early and as a result their profit margins will suffer."

Ms. Kalish estimated that Christmas season sales, adjusted for inflation, will be about the same as last year.

The new data added to a feeling of gloom and divisiveness as the White House bids to marshal its forces to deal with the economy with the November 1992 presidential election looming.

The frustration Americans feel over the economy is showing up in falling popularity polls for Mr. Bush. A survey by the Los Angeles Times showed that economic woes cut Mr. Bush's approval rating to 53 per cent against 65 per cent two months.

Only 29 per cent of those surveyed approved Mr. Bush's handling of the economy, down from 42 per cent in September.

The republican leader in the Senate, Bob Dole, warned Mr. Bush that he was in "rough shape" politically and said that he should seek a quick consensus on a programme to promote economic growth, the New York Times cited him as saying.

Sweden bursts to protect crown

STOCKHOLM (R) — The Swedish central bank abruptly raised its key lending rate by six percentage points to 17.5 per cent Thursday in an effort to stem a speculative tide of currency flowing out of the country.

The bank and government said the big rate hike, the largest one-day rise in recent history, was needed to reassure the outside world that Sweden had no intention of devaluing its currency like neighbouring Finland.

"We want to demonstrate forcefully that the (Swedish crown's) exchange rate is fixed," central bank governor Bengt Dennis told a news conference.

Swedish officials said Finland's effective 12.3 per cent devaluation of the markka last month had caused investors to pull funds out of Sweden too, fearing a possible knock-on devaluation effect.

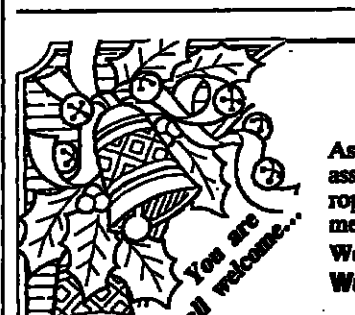
Prime Minister Carl Bildt said: "We have been infected by Finland, but we have not got the disease." He said the rate hike was "a tough measure at a tough time to make a tough policy possible — but there's no other way."

Money market dealers said the capital flight, totalling 26 billion crowns (\$4.4 billion) in the last three reporting weeks, also stemmed from market doubts as to whether the government could carry out its economic policy.

As well as the Finnish devaluation, Mr. Dennis said factors

behind the currency outflow were tensions within the European Monetary System (EMS) and liquidity problems affecting some Nordic banks.

Bank governor Dennis sought to reassure Swedes worried about how the higher rates would hit their home loans. "Our experience from the 1980s is that these big interest rate increases do not remain in force for very long," he said.



Basma Establishment for Flowers and Gifts
Prides itself of always presenting the best gifts

As always, you will find the best and most beautiful assortment of Christmas decorations, our guaranteed plain lighting ropes and Xmas cards... in addition to an excellent assortment of souvenirs, silverware, chocolate and toys.

We have an ongoing flow of ideas that suit your excellent taste

Wadi Saqra Street, near the Holiday Inn Bridge
Our prices are reasonable and competitive

Happy New Year

Enjoy the large collection at
CAVE DES CADEAUX

The most beautiful gifts at Cave Des Cadeaux the loveliest and largest assortment of gifts: Crystal, silver, artificial flowers, chocolate, toys, in addition to a marvellous collection of decorations which we chose especially to fit your tastes.

We have also guaranteed plain electric strings and post cards.

Our ideas are renewable: Distinguished gift wrappings.

As in the last year we have reduced prices suitable for all.

Sweflyeh/tel. 829684/Al Nasouh Al Taher Street/ near the old Housing Bank

Ahlan Wa Sahlan

Santa Claus is waiting for our dear children.

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — Shares ended sharply lower as investors stayed on the sidelines after John Kerin was transferred out of the treasurer's post. The All Ordinaries index fell 24.4 points.

TOKYO — Stocks ended mixed after very quiet trade. The Nikkei closed down 14.11 points at 22,445.06, with an estimated 200 million shares traded.

FRANKFURT — German shares closed another cautious, quiet session barely changed, with the DAX blue chip index ending at 1,558.18, a rise of 4.76 points on the day.

ZURICH — Swiss shares finished mixed to lower in quiet pre-weekend business which lacked buying interest. The SPI fell 4.6 points to 1,027.1.

PARIS — Weaker than expected U.S. job figures slapped the Paris Bourse below 1,700 to its lowest close in 10 months, erasing all the gains it had racked up since the end of the Gulf war. The CAC-40 index ended 17.51 points lower at 1,685.72.

LONDON — Economic and political worries conspired to push the FTSE 100 share index 18.3 points lower to 2,388.7 for a net loss over the past week of 31.5.

NEW YORK — Wall Street stocks maintained a modest advance at midday, but the Dow was off the session's best levels. The Dow 30 was up about nine points at 2,898 after spurring to 2905 in mid-morning activity.

Amman Financial Market weekly trading

Following is a summary of trading during last week and the previous week:

	Nov. 30 — Dec. 4	Dec. 2-7
Daily average	JD 1,888,006	JD 1,981,160
Total volume	JD 9,025,631	JD 9,585,880
Total shares	5,216,895	4,736,383
No. Of contracts	4,879	4,063

Sectoral trading:

	Nov. 30 — Dec. 4	Dec. 2-7
Industrial	JD 4,190,588 (46.4%)	JD 6,872,830 (72.3%)
Financial	JD 3,468,879 (38.5%)	JD 1,637,725 (17.2%)
Service	(13.4%)	(9.3%)
Insurance	(1.7%)	(1.2%)

	Nov. 30 — Dec. 4	Dec. 2-7
Share price index	140.1	138.4
No. of companies	88	75
Price movement (rise)	40	31
(Decline)	26	29
(Stable)	14	15

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Tudjman: U.S. backs war if it fails to recognise Croatia

BOON (R) — Croatian President Franjo Tudjman said Friday the United States would be supporting a barbaric war if it did not rapidly recognise his republic's independence from Yugoslavia.

Mr. Tudjman, who Thursday won Germany's promise to recognise Croatia this month, declared he was "astonished" to hear Washington had come out firmly against quick recognition.

"If this is true, we will have to see it as a setback," he told journalists who informed him of a U.S. call Thursday evening for continued negotiation on Yugoslavia's future.

"Taken objectively, that equals support for the aggression against Croatia, support for this barbaric war that is unparalleled in the world today," he said in Bonn.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl promised Mr. Tudjman Thursday that Germany and as many of its European Community partners as possible would recognise Croatia by Christmas.

He made the same promise to Slovenia two days earlier and backed up Bonn's tough stand against Serbia by suspending all transport agreements with Belgrade Wednesday.

Tension among Western allies over recognition, which Bonn has

vigorously supported against its partners' calls for caution, came to the surface Thursday when both the United States and France expressed reservations.

State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said the United States felt continued negotiations on a peaceful solution to the fighting in Yugoslavia were the best way to proceed.

"We are concerned that recognition will lead to more killing and set off an expansion of the conflict. We are concerned about what it will mean for other republics like Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia," a U.S. official said.

French President Francois Mitterrand on his part warned against "simple unconditional recognition."

"What France wishes is that this sovereignty should be recognised and implemented under international guarantees," he said in a television interview.

Mr. Kohl's spokesman Dieter Vogel played down Washington's doubts, saying: "The German government has known this for a long time, this is not new. There are indeed different opinions."

Mr. Tudjman said two or three EC countries would probably not recognise his republic this month

but said that countries that did not do so now would soon follow.

Austria announced Thursday evening it would recognise the republics and Mr. Tudjman said other states — including Australia, the Vatican, Argentina and several other South American countries — would follow soon.

Germany put no conditions on recognition for Croatia and noted with satisfaction a law the Zagreb parliament passed this week to protect minority rights, Mr. Tudjman said.

Mr. Tudjman said he did not discuss military aid with Mr. Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher on his visit to Germany.

"But recognition will certainly put Croatia in a much more favourable situation because Croatia, as a fully independent state, would then be able to organise its defence much better," he said.

Meanwhile, the Yugoslav army, which has backed Serbian rebels in Croatia, said Friday Croatian forces in the besieged port of Dubrovnik were fighting among themselves.

Tanjung News Agency quoted army sources as saying there were minor skirmishes between army units and Croatian forces on the

hill of Srdj, overlooking the Adriatic port, but mentioned no shelling of the famous resort.

It said the battle between Croatian guardsmen and the right wing Hos paramilitary group, headed by jailed Dobroslov Paraga, president of the Croatian Rights Party, had been going on since Thursday night.

"The battles which started last night between followers of Mr. Paraga's party and National Guard continued this morning," Tanjung quoted army sources as saying.

A U.N. envoy, Staffan de Mistura of the U.N. children's agency (UNICEF), said in a brief telephone call from Dubrovnik to Reuters in Rome that the town came under heavy bombardment on Friday morning. He said smoke was rising from the centre of the old part of the city.

Speaking in Italian, De Mistura used the term "heavy bombardment" but did not stay on the phone long enough to specify if the city was being shelled or was under air attack.

Croatian radio said the town was shelled from navy boats and from surrounding hills. One person was killed and nine were injured, it said.



Francois Mitterrand

Mitterrand approval rating hits all-time low

PARIS (R) — President Francois Mitterrand's popularity is at its lowest since he took office in 1981, according to an opinion poll published Friday.

Only 31 per cent of French voters are still confident in Mr. Mitterrand, whose term runs until 1995, while two-thirds no longer trust him, the poll by the Sofres Institute for Le Figaro magazine showed.

Buttressed by rising unemployment, economic stagnation, disquiet over immigration and finance scandals, the Socialist president has tried to recapture the initiative over European unification and plans to amend the French constitution.

But the latest poll showed his approval rating, which reached a peak during the Gulf war early this year, continues to sink. He lost eight percentage points in a month.

Prime Minister Edith Cresson's approval rating was even lower at 26 per cent, with 69 per cent saying they were not confident in her.

The poll showed the two most popular French politicians were European Commission President Jacques Delors, with 51 per cent, and centre-right European parliamentarian Simone Veille, with 50 per cent.

In a separate development, a senior army high command source said Thursday the French army is to be reorganised into two separate commands in 1993, one for operations in Europe and the other for action elsewhere.

Each command will be headed by its own inter-services staff, able to activate air, naval and ground forces, the source told Reuters.

The Europe Command will be created from the present French armoured corps which has units in France and Germany.

The Overseas Command, trained for commando missions and counter-insurgency warfare, will be composed of light, mobile units but will also be able to draw on an armoured division, the source said.

Shooting rampage in India claims 51 lives

NEW DELHI (R) — Sikh insurgents gunned down 10 people at a railroad crossing in northern India early Friday, bringing to at least 51 the death toll in an overnight shooting rampage, police said.

More than 20 people have been injured in the shooting linked to a decade-old insurrection by militant Sikhs.

Ten bodies were found at a railroad crossing in Uttar Pradesh state Friday, the victims of an attack by Sikh militants, police said in Lucknow, the state capital.

On Thursday night, at least 14 people were killed and more than a dozen injured in attacks in the state's Terai region, a jungle belt in the foothills of the Himalayas.

At least 26 people were killed in a town in Haryana state Thursday, United News of India said. Four Sikh militants drove around Toghana town shooting at motorists, shopkeepers and workers at a cotton mill. Nine people were badly injured.

Toghana is about 40 kilometres from the Sikh-dominated state of Punjab, where the militants are fighting for an independent homeland.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed in the insurgency, including more than 5,200 this year.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency said a merchant was shot and killed in Punjab Thursday night, the latest victim of almost daily hit-and-run attacks in the state.

No arrests have been reported in any of the incidents.

In parliament, an opposition leader demanded the government take action against the spread of insurgency outside Punjab.

Security forces needed to take coordinated action to halt attacks intended to provoke a backlash against minority Sikhs living outside Punjab, Marxist Saifuddin Choudhary said.

Both Haryana and Uttar Pradesh are close to Punjab, and militants have been known to operate in these states if their activities are restricted in their own territory.

Last week, the army was ordered to help restore law and order in Punjab and more than 100,000 troops have fanned out across the state.

Sikhs make up only three per cent of India's 850 million people but are in a majority in Punjab, a prosperous farming state bordering Pakistan.

The militants say Sikhs are discriminated against by the Hindus, who make up 82 per cent of India's population and dominate the government.

Tokyo ousts Tehran as world's most expensive city

GENEVA (R) — Tokyo has ousted Tehran as the world's most expensive city due to effective devaluation of the Iranian currency, a Geneva consultant firm said.

The Japanese capital scored 171 on a cost-of-living index which ranked New York as 100. Another Japanese city, Osaka, came second with 157, followed by two African capitals, Libreville (134) and Brazzaville (133), in a survey of 98 major cities by Corporate Resources Group (CRG). Oslo and Stockholm tied for fifth place at 132, joining Helsinki (129) and the Swiss cities of Zurich (120) and Geneva (119) as Europe's dearest centres.

The survey rated the Iranian capital among the world's least expensive cities with an index of 65, due to the official floating internal exchange rate of the rial reaching approximately 1,400 for \$1 compared with 67 previously, CRG said. But it added that visitors to Tehran still had to pay certain expenses, including hotel bills, in dollars.

Other cities in the top 10 were Tripoli (129), Dakar (122), Taipei (122), Abidjan (120) and Copenhagen (119). CRG said it used prices and exchange rates in effect in mid-September in calculating the ratings.

Chinese student dissident goes on trial

PEKING (R) — Chinese student leader Li Mingqi went on trial Friday on charges of counter-revolution at a hearing Western diplomats said could signal a new round of trials linked to 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations.

Mr. Li was initially detained on June 4, 1990 for giving a speech at Peking University the previous night to commemorate the first

anniversary of the brutal crackdown on protesters around Peking's Tiananmen Square.

A notice posted outside the Peking Intermediate People's Court announced Mr. Li's trial for spreading counter-revolutionary propaganda and agitation. It gave no details.

Western diplomats said they believe the political trial may be

the first of a series, and reflects disagreement within the Chinese leadership on how to handle jailed dissidents.

Last Friday student leader Wang Youcai, also active in the 1989 protests, was released early from jail and charges against prominent labour organiser Han Dongfang were dropped.

Polish parliament elects Jan Olszewski as premier

WARSAW (R) — The Polish parliament elected Jan Olszewski, a former Solidarity lawyer and candidate of a centre-right coalition, as prime minister Friday.

The Sejm (lower house) voted 250 to 57 with 107 abstentions to appoint Mr. Olszewski, nominated by President Lech Walesa Thursday.

Mr. Olszewski, 61, replaces Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, whose resignation was approved by the Sejm Thursday. Mr. Bielecki offered his resignation after parliamentary elections in October.

In a statement before the vote, Mr. Olszewski said his government might have to ask Poles to tighten belts further as he saw little hope of quick relief from the country's deep recession.

"The economic situation is such that no government may count on quick or easy success, possibly on any success for a long time," Mr. Olszewski said.

"Possibly we will have to appeal to society for further sacrifices."

Poland embarked two years ago on a free market economy. The reforms resulted in acute recession and two million unemployed.

Buttressed by rising unemployment, economic stagnation, disquiet over immigration and finance scandals, the Socialist president has tried to recapture the initiative over European unification and plans to amend the French constitution.

But the latest poll showed his approval rating, which reached a peak during the Gulf war early this year, continues to sink. He lost eight percentage points in a month.

Prime Minister Edith Cresson's approval rating was even lower at 26 per cent, with 69 per cent saying they were not confident in her.

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The Overseas Command, trained for commando missions and counter-insurgency warfare, will be composed of light, mobile units but will also be able to draw on an armoured division, the source said.

Ukraine aims for boosted profile, EC membership

GENEVA (R) — Independent Ukraine aims to set up economic ties with all its neighbours and key states around the world and eventually join the European Community, according to the former Soviet republic's envoy in Geneva.

Andrei Ozadovsky, Ukrainian ambassador to the United Nations European headquarters since 1984, said the new-born state would also play a full role in disarmament negotiations and join the Helsinki European security process in its own right.

"Despite our limited resources and the economic problems we face, Ukraine intends to show it is a fully-fledged member of the international family of nations," Mr. Ozadovsky told Reuters in an interview Thursday.

"Our priority will be links with the states around us as well as the United States and Canada and other countries that have large Ukrainian populations," said Mr. Ozadovsky, 59, one of Kiev's two ambassadors already in place in the outside world.

"Eventually we will seek admission to the EC. Although we know that will not be easy we feel our industrial and agricultural base and our position at the geographical centre of Europe give us special advantages."

Ukraine and Byelorussia, now called Belarus, were admitted to the United Nations in 1945 when Josef Stalin, arguing for recogni-

tion of the role they played in defeating Nazi Germany, sought to ensure extra voting power for Moscow in the new world body.

Since then, although diplomats from both were often active in U.N. councils, they operated from overall Soviet missions in Geneva and New York and were regarded as mouthpieces for the Kremlin.

"Now, we have our own foreign policy concept and our own national priorities will predominate," Ozadovsky said.

The envoy said that in future his country would pay more attention to the score of U.N. agencies and international organisations represented in Geneva.

The envoy, a U.N. veteran who worked in its New York secretariat as a young diplomat, said one vital mission he aimed to fulfil was to increase outside awareness of the continuing effects of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

"There is still little understanding around the world among political leaders, public organisations and even scientists that this was a catastrophe for all of us whose consequences could be felt for decades," Mr. Ozadovsky said.

Mr. Ozadovsky said Ukraine had no desire to build up a large army comparable in size to those of France and Germany as some parliamentarians in Kiev suggested.

Soviet cosacks publicly lash 3 fur hat thieves

MOSCOW (R) — Local Cosacks publicly lashed three thieves who were snatching furs from the heads of residents of the southern Russian town of Krasnodar, Soviet News Agency (TASS) reported. It said people rushed to the aid of one victim of the thieves. It was not clear when the lashing took place.

Social stigma of single motherhood erodes in U.S.

WASHINGTON (R) — Unwed motherhood appears to be losing its social stigma in the United States as more women are now choosing to remain single rather than marry the father of their child, the U.S. Census Bureau has reported. Only 27 per cent of women 15 to 34 years old who conceived out of wedlock in the years 1985-89 married the father before the child was born, a census bureau report on fertility said. This showed a steady decline from the 52 per cent of women in similar circumstances who married before the birth of the child in the years 1960-64. The report on fertility of American women was based on information from the June 1990 census. "The decline may reflect the opinion of some women that they may be better off in the long run by relying more on the support of their parents and relatives for financial and emotional assistance than by entering a potentially unstable marriage undertaken solely to prevent an out-of-wedlock birth," the report said. The Census Bureau also found that a majority, 53 per cent, of women with children under a year old were working in 1990, a steady rise from 31 per cent in 1976; the first year the statistic was gathered. The number topped 50 per cent in 1987.

Honduras wages war on witches, warlocks

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (R) — The Honduran government has declared war against what it said was a mushrooming army of witches, warlocks and soothsayers. "We're going to continue telling our governors and mayors to combat these people permanently, as if it were a war," Interior Minister Francisco Cordona told reporters. Last month, the government banned all practitioners of witchcraft, but Cordona said they continued to spread rapidly and were preying on people's ignorance. He said since the decree, which also bans witches and warlocks from making public declarations in the media, the government had shut down an undisclosed number of illegal "clinics." "They cheat people by saying they can cure them with medicines that don't work and they tell them their futures," Cordona said, adding that among the witches' ranks were many foreigners who would be deported if they were caught. Sociologists say the rampant spread of witchcraft in Honduras is linked to poverty and general uncertainty over the future of the Central American country.

Japan stops short of war apology

TOKYO (R) — Japan stopped short Friday of an outright apology for its actions in World War II but said it was in "deep reflection" for the suffering it caused.

The statement came on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour — Dec. 7, 1941.

"The government of Japan is in deep reflection for having caused unbearable agony and sorrow to the peoples in parts of Asia and the Pacific in fighting started with the attack on Pearl Harbour," Chief Cabinet Secretary Koichi Kato said.

"Our government, together with the people, is determined not to repeat such an unfortunate history and renews this reflection on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbour," he said at a regular news conference.

An opposition party plan to apologise to Japan's former enemies on the Pearl Harbour anniversary was sidelined by debate with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) over Japan's role in U.N. peacekeeping operations (PKO).

"Confrontation between the LDP and the Socialists has become so intense that we have to concentrate on opposing the PKO bills," one Socialist Party official said.

LDP members hardened their objections to an apology after U.S. President George Bush ruled out an apology for the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1955, Kyodo News Service reported Thursday.

"Why must we fling mud at the history of Japan with our own hands?" former Education Minister Masayuki Fujio said.

Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa is racing against time to have the peacekeeping bills passed by the upper house before it goes into a recess on Dec. 10. The lower house has approved the bills.

Another reason for the lack of an apology was the failure of members of parliament to reach a consensus on the motion, which should be passed unanimously.

At a meeting Thursday of an LDP faction, LDP member Shimura Iahihara objected to such a resolution, saying the constitution already renounced war.

Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe told the Washington Post in an interview published Wednesday: "We feel deep remorse about the unbearable suffering and sorrow Japan inflicted on the American people and the peoples of Asia and the Pacific during the Pacific war, a war that Japan started by a surprise attack on Pearl Harbour."

Hawke sacks treasurer

CANBERRA (R) — Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke sacked his treasurer, John Kerin, Friday to try to shore up the flagging fortunes of his government and revive a struggling economy.

Finance Minister Ralph Willis will become the third treasurer in six months Monday.

Mr. Hawke, who is under pressure to deliver a long-promised recovery from Australia's worst recession in 60 years, told a news conference policy to the public.

"I came to the decision this morning that the time had come when both interests of Mr. Kerin and of the government required the decision on my part and I made that decision," Mr. Hawke said.

"Kerin is not an aggressive man. He is a gentle man... I think we are going to need a combination of knowledge and constructive aggression," he said.

"I believe Ralph Willis has demonstrated over recent times that he is admirably suited to bring those qualifications to bear."

Mr. Hawke stressed there would be no policy change due to the reshuffle.

Mr. Kerin has borne the brunt of criticism within Labour Party ranks for the government's apparent inability to marshal a counter-attack to a sweeping tax reform package unveiled by the conservative opposition last month.

Mr. Kerin, 55, an ex-chicken farmer who was primary industries minister for eight years before June, was demoted to the Transport and Communications Ministry. Kim Beazley was promoted from the Transport Ministry to the finance portfolio.

In this role Mr. Beazley will act as a budget administrator and a back-up to the treasurer, who is in charge of economic policy.

Kenyan opposition splits

NAIROBI (R) — Kenya's loose pro-democracy pressure group split into two Thursday, just two days after President Daniel Arap Moi set the scene for an end to single-party politics.

Three founder members of the group, the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), told a news conference they were turning it into the first party to challenge the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU).

Martin Shikuku, a former member of parliament, said he was interim chairman of the new party, which would keep the

name FORD and would be registered as soon as the law was changed.

But FORD's three other founder members, along with a group of prominent human rights lawyers and disaffected politicians, told a later news conference that they planned to launch another political party.

At Mr. Arap Moi's urging, KANU delegates voted Tuesday for parliament to repeal a section of the constitution which banned opposition and consolidated KANU's longstanding grip on power.

New Zealand Alliance beats government, opposition in poll

WELLINGTON (R) — A centrist alliance formed in New Zealand just a week ago is already more popular than the government National Party and the official opposition, according to an opinion poll published Friday.

The poll showed support for the Alliance — a grouping of centrists, environmentalists and a Maori Party — at 37 per cent, two per cent ahead of the opposition Labour Party and 10 per cent in front of the ailing government.

Alliance member of parliament Jim Anderson, leader of one of the Alliance's component parties, said the poll was an emphatic warning to National and Labour.

"People are expressing their disgust at the utterly discredited two-party system. They are placing a new hope in the alliance. The message of this poll is a plague on both your houses," Mr. Anderson said in a statement.

The Alliance was officially formed at the weekend as the poll of 750 voters was taken by the Mattingly Polling Organisation for the weekly National Business

Review.

The National Party was elected with a large majority just over a year ago, but support for Prime Minister Jim Bolger has nosedived since plans to sweep away large parts of New Zealand's welfare state were implemented.

Last month Mr. Bolger's popularity was at seven per cent, the lowest ever recorded for a prime minister, according to a separate poll.

Mr. Bolger has been in office only for a year but is already under pressure to boost his party's popularity, particularly as New Zealand's constitution rules that elections are held every three years.

The Labour Party, apparently aware of the danger that the Alliance could split its voters, disclosed a swing to the left Thursday.

Labour, which governed from 1984 to 1990, named left-winger Michael Cullen as shadow finance minister, an appointment Mr. Bolger said would "send shivers down the spine of the financial community."

Delors points to twin threats to EC summit deal

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Community (EC) summit next week is as much at risk from cash demands by poorer states as from Britain's Euro-scepticism, European Commission President Jacques Delors said Thursday.

"One has forgotten that there are other countries which might say at the end 'this won't do,'" Mr. Delors said in a last news conference four days before the Maastricht summit on political and monetary union.

"It won't just be Britain against all the others."

The final draft on political union, circulated by EC president the Netherlands Thursday, indicated that Britain and the "southern states" — Spain, Ireland, Portugal and Greece — may be poised to win concessions.

The text, which caps a year of treaty negotiations, still reflected majority views by referring to an EC "federal goal" — despised by Britain — and by not mentioning the pledge of further funds sought by Spain and the other three.

But the Dutch presidency said in a cover note for the draft that "it was not changing these key parts yet, it reserved the right to submit other options when EC leaders meet in Maastricht in the Netherlands Monday and Tuesday."

Diplomats said this showed that Britain and the southern states had fought so hard their opponents would probably have to yield at least in part.

In return, Britain may have to accept granting the EC a minimal say in social affairs — an idea it has ferociously resisted so far because it fears Brussels could spoil a decade of efforts by the conservative government to curb trade unions.

Mr. Delors, departing from his

usual critical tone, peppered his news conference with conciliatory remarks towards Britain and said he could understand London's resistance to including a social role in the EC's brief.

Germany, where Chancellor Helmut Kohl's vision of a "united states of Europe" has been little debated so far, suddenly appeared to get cold feet Thursday over the idea of giving up its Deutschmark as the backbone of an EC single currency.

Bankers, industrialists and newspaper commentators warned that Germany would be taking enormous risks in agreeing to link its currency with those of high-inflation, high-deficit countries in an Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and questioned the benefits that might be gained.

Finance Minister Theo Waigel, trying to reassure the country, told parliament Bonn had not sacrificed the mark.

"Nor have we made a present of it to Europe," he said.

"We will only bring our currency into a Community in which stability is guaranteed as much as it is in Germany. We call on our partners to adapt. They must first harden their own currencies. Only then can currency union come into force."

Delors said poorer EC states, which may not qualify to join in EMU when the time comes later this century, were dead serious about their demand for more help from wealthy northern states.

Economic and social cohesion, the term used in the EC to cover this issue, is "a key point of the marriage contract" for them, he said.

Other points where EC leaders would have to work out a deal included the details of a future common foreign and security

policy, including for the first time the notion of an EC role in defence affairs.

British Prime Minister John Major, in an article published Thursday, said Britain was prepared to agree to an increase in the powers of the European Parliament at next week's EC summit.

"The European Parliament must have a more important role to play," Major wrote in the leftist De Volkskrant newspaper, the Netherlands' third-largest daily.

"We are prepared to give it more power, in monitoring the commission more rigorously, establishing itself as a real watchdog over the community's budgetary affairs," he wrote.

"We are also prepared to give the European Parliament some additional influence over legislation," he said.

"I shall come ready to negotiate, and clear the path towards a more effective, democratic and open Community," he said. "I am proud of the Community's successes and I want to an agreement at Maastricht."

Meanwhile, the German Parliament firmly backed Mr. Kohl's policy on European unity Thursday, but urged him not to let political union take a back seat to economic union at next week's summit in Maastricht.

The call came in a joint resolution approved by both Mr. Kohl's ruling coalition parties and the main Social Democratic (SPD) opposition, following debate on European union in the Bundestag or lower house.

The resolution said the parliament supported Mr. Kohl's position at the European Community (EC) summit.

It urged Mr. Kohl to strive for

"a substantial and balanced result, whereby negotiations on political union do not lag behind economic and monetary union."

The resolution also called for the German side to press for an increase in the powers of the European Parliament and urged the summit to come up with a clear basis for joint EC foreign and security policies.

"The strengthening and expansion of the rights of the European Parliament are indispensable," the resolution said.

It also sought approval in Maastricht for a gradual shift to common policies in other areas like immigration and asylum for political refugees.

During the debate, Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher criticised the draft treaty on European integration as too timid on granting new rights to the European Parliament.

Germany still wants changes in the draft treaty on a European Community political union, he told parliament.

Mentioning an issue firmly opposed by Britain, Mr. Genscher also stated: "We also strive for a federal structure for the united Europe."

"The German government does not consider the results reached so far as sufficient," Mr. Genscher said.

"We want the parliament to have a say in further areas. We want simultaneous mandates for the commission and the parliament. And we want the parliament to have a say in changing treaties and supplementary agreements."

"If progress on this cannot be achieved in one step, we will work for a step-by-step approach," he added.

Handwritten signature: J. I. M. J. J.